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THE CONQUEROR'S LADY

THE CONQUEROR'S LADY

INES SUAREZ

BY

STELLA BURKE MAY

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O. L. HARMEYER

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY

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DEDICATED TO THE WOMEN OF CHILE WHO BY THEIR COURAGE, THEIR PATRIOTISM, AND THEIR INDEPENDENCE OF SPIRIT AND OF THOUGHT, WON MY ADMIRATION AND MY AFFECTION DURING MY RESIDENCE IN SANTIAGO

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD xi

I. THE CHILD WITH THE NOSE OF THE CID 3

II. THE SAINT WHO RODE ON HORSEBACK 17

III. AN ACT OF FAITH 23

IV. A COURIER TALKS IN THE TAVERN 35

V. ONE OF THESE DAYS I SHALL GO 44

VI. A SOLDIER RETURNED FROM THE WARS 54

VII. THE CONQUERING HEROES COME 71

VIII. PATIENCE! PATIENCE! 89

IX. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL 98

X. THE BATTLE OF LAS SALINAS 124

XI. I HAVE A WISH 147

XII. I COME AS A WOMAN, BUT I FEAR NOTHING 161

XIII. THE MARCH BEGINS 178

XIV. YOUR LITTLE CAT HAS CAUGHT A RAT 190

XV. SANTIAGO! 209

XVI. REFUGE 232

XVII. WARFARE 246

XVIII. TOIL 260

XIX. THE ROYAL DECREE 285

XX. PEACE, AND THE PASSING 308

EPILOGUE 327

BIBLIOGRAPHY 342

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INES SUAREZ AND PEDRO DE VALDIVIA.....*Frontispiece*

Facing Page

CHARLES THE FIFTH, OF SPAIN..... 18

AN AUTO-DA-FÉ OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION..... 26

A SPANISH GALLEY UNDER SAIL..... 38

DON FRANCISCO PIZARRO, SON OF A SWINEHERD, AND DISCOVERER OF A LAND OF GOLD..... 76

CHILE, AS CONCEIVED BY A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MAP-MAKER..... 128

PIZARRO MARCHING ON THE CAPITAL OF THE INCAS.. 186

THE FOUNDATION OF SANTIAGO..... 214

PEDRO DE VALDIVIA, THE STATUE OF THE CONQUEROR THAT STANDS ON SANTA LUCIA, IN SANTIAGO..... 236

INCA SLAVES BRINGING UP TRIBUTE TO THE CONQUERORS OF PERU..... 252

THE CONQUEROR OF CHILE, AS HE MAY HAVE LOOKED AT THE END OF LONG YEARS OF CONQUEST..... 312

FOREWORD

On a morning in January, 1540, an army of one hundred and seventy Spanish soldiers, commanded by Pedro de Valdivia, departed from Cuzco, Peru, to conquer the land called Chile.

One Spanish woman accompanied them. Her name was Ines Suarez.

More than a year later, the gaunt remnants of that little army clambered up the solitary rock that the Indians called Huelen (Sorrow) and which today is known as the Cerro Santa Lucia, and took possession of Chile in the name of God and of Charles the Fifth, of Spain.

For twelve years the Indians fought them, the most warlike Indians in the Western Hemisphere—the Araucanians—who had dwelt unconquered from the age of stone until the coming of the Spaniard.

Chileans today will tell you—though nearly four hundred years have passed since those gallant days—of Don Pedro de Valdivia, the valiant, the conqueror of their country. Leading you to the summit of the Cerro Santa Lucia, they will show you his statue—the only statue in South America erected to the memory of a Spanish *conquistador.*

But of Ines Suarez, the Spanish woman, who rode her white horse to victory with him, the world knows little or nothing. No statue marks the spot where her bold feet first trod on Chilean soil.

Numberless historians describe that journey of Val-

divia and his army across the cruel desert of Atacama, but the records of Ines Suarez appear only as ghosts dimly outlined in the background; her coat of mail whitened by the dust of the desert; her sword stained with the blood of the conquered.

Modern historians give but the briefest outline of the story of Ines Suarez. "A strange Spanish woman," she is called by one. Another dismisses her with a line: "Only one Spanish woman was counted among the army: Ines Suarez, who accompanied the *Jefe*."

The ancient chroniclers told more. Pedro Mariño de Lovera, a contemporary of Valdivia, wrote: "When the army was near to rout by the Indians, Ines Suarez put a coat of mail over her shoulders and drawing an elk-hide jacket over that, went out among the soldiers with her sword upraised, animating them by her words more as if she were a valorous captain skilled at arms than a woman exercised on the embroidery cushion." Captain Gongora Marmolejo, historian and soldier, who served under Pedro de Valdivia at the time, stated: "The Indians said afterward that the Christians would have been defeated were it not for a woman on a white horse." Again, in another chronicle, Lovera wrote: "Doña Ines unsheathed the sword that she carried and with her own hand killed seven *caciques* (Indian chiefs) with as much valor as if she were a Roldán or the Cid Ruy Diaz."

The complete story of Ines Suarez has never before been told. Some portions of her life before she reached South America lie largely in the realms of conjecture. From many sources it has been gathered bit by bit: from Spanish and Chilean historians of modern days; from old Spanish documents, many of them unedited,

some of them but recently brought to light, all of them powdering in the hand of the reader after lying for years in the dark archives of two continents; from old letters dimmed by the dust of years. The last letters of Pedro de Valdivia to his King, Charles the Fifth of Spain, are significant in their simplicity. To his Viceroy who ordered him to separate from Ines Suarez, he wrote: "She is an honored woman in my home. She came with me by permission of the Marquis. She is a good woman, and loved by all."

That letter was sent to the King a little while before Valdivia went out to his death at the hands of the Indians.

THE CONQUEROR'S LADY

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHILD WITH THE NOSE OF THE CID

IN THE broad valley of the Carpetanos mountains, in the province of Cáceres, lies the proud city of Plasencia, one of the loveliest in Spain and, in that spring of 1512, when Ines Suarez was born, one of the most important in all old Extremadura.

Plasencianos, when they spoke the name of their city, murmured "Thanks be to God and to man" (*Para que agradase á Dios y á los hombres*) and bowed their heads in prayer.

And well might they give thanks to God—for the clear, abundant waters of the pleasant Jerte, with its shores eternally green; for the peace of the softly undulating hills, spreading away to the saw-edged mountains. Well, indeed, might they give thanks to God—for the oasis of green in the arid land of Extremadura, where lime cliffs whitened in the Spanish sun and lime dust choked the wayfarer along the Spanish roads.

Well, too, might they give thanks to man—for the craft of the Romans with their aqueducts of stone and the three arched bridges that spanned the River Jerte; for the architecture of the Goths, with their cathedral proud as a full-rigged ship, its spires rising like masts against the ultramarine sky; for the lacy arabesques

picked out by the noonday sun shining warmly on the white façade.

The old cathedral of Plasencia was young that spring of 1512 when a proud Castilian *hidalgo* knelt upon its hard stone floor before the altar of Santiago, patron saint of Spain, and prayed that God, who was about to bless him with a child, might, in his wisdom, grant that it be a son.

All night he had knelt there, praying for a son who would carry the flag of Spain to new lands across the seas. Why not? Sons of Extremadura were setting forth daily for this new world across the waters. From Cadiz, from San Lúcar, from Palos—graceful galleons or caravels of open hold were sailing westward, following the path set by the Italian, Cristóbal Colón, who three times had made the journey and three times, in the name of Christ and the King, had given new lands to Spain.

Cristóbal Colón, the Italian, was dead now these six years, yet had he not told, in the University of Salamanca, of strange discoveries in strange lands inhabited by stranger people; of rivers with beds of gold; of shores strewn with golden pebbles larger than the eggs of Spain? Had he not brought back with him some of the pagan heretics as proof, wearing golden collars around their necks, bracelets of gold on their arms, and gold helmets on their heathen heads, and speaking the unknown tongue of the infidel? Small wonder that all Spain was aroused, that ten thousand students of the University of Salamanca had been set by the ears, that sons of Extremadura were setting forth daily.

Every day new tales came in: to Spain, to Extrema-

dura, to Plasencia, the beautiful, *para que agradase á Dios y á los hombres.* By the three gates which gave entrance to the city—by the gate of the Sun, of Trujillo, of Coria—new tales were constantly arriving. Along the Alameda, with its seats of stone, Plasencianos were gossiping. Around the *glorietas* and the fountains, old women with water jars on their heads paused for the latest word from New Spain, as they called the newly discovered country. Wherever Spaniards walked or talked the conversation was always the same. The lands across the sea were paved with gold and peopled with infidels who did not know the dear Christ. Every hour added new chapters to the romantic story.

Extremadura was being depopulated. Young men, men well past their prime, old men leaning on their staffs, were kicking the lime dust from their heels, and with swords upraised and the war cry of Spain on their lips were setting forth for Christ and the King. *Cristo y Santiago! Santiago y Cierra España!* The air rang with the cry.

The proud Castilian *hidalgo* heard it as he knelt at the altar of Santiago praying that his child might be a son who could carry the arms of the Suarez to the lands across the sea. For that was the *hidalgo's* name—Suarez. And since history has given him no other, we must supply what history has omitted and, choosing at random from the Tom, Dick and Harry of Spain—Fulano, Sutano, y Megano—we shall call him Fulano —Don Fulano de Suarez—since he was an *hidalgo,* with Don before his name.

Don Fulano de Suarez, kneeling on the hard stone floor before the altar of Santiago in the cathedral of

Plasencia, heard the tramp of soldiers' feet, the ring of horses' hoofs along the roads that led to San Lúcar, to Palos, to adventure. "Verily," thought Don Fulano, "there will not be left even one little mule in all Extremadura."

He beat his forehead with the flat of his hand. *"Que hago!"* he exclaimed. *"Que hago!"* (What to do! What to do!)

Hoofbeats on the pavement rang in his ears. White plumes tossing on helmeted heads swam before his eyes. Must he remain at home while others went forth to make history? He with his aged father, his olive trees, his wounded knee—reminder of the battle of Oran in the year 1509? How could he seek adventure?

Even as he knelt on the hard stone floor, his wounded knee made answer. If only he had eaten more sparingly of the sausages of Extremadura, of the fat fowls stewed in milk; if he had drunk less of the wine of Tarragona, he too might perhaps seek adventure. But now he must remain at home like a woman, while his neighbors found romance.

The oil wick sputtered on the altar of Santiago. The *hidalgo* bowed his head to the ground. "Grant that my child be a son!" He repeated the rosary ten times. He ran over in his mind the names of his neighbors who already were seeking adventure and fortune in the world across the seas.

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, from Xeres de Caballeros, was somewhere on the Isthmus of Darien. With him was his cousin, Francisco Pizarro, from Trujillo; and young Hernán de Soto, also from Xeres de Caballeros; and Hernando Cortés from Medellín was in Hispaniola in the Caribbees. All of them Extremeños, carry-

ing the flag of Castile, while he, Don Fulano de Suarez, must stay at home like a woman, stay in Plasencia with his father, his olive trees, his knee wounded in the battle of Oran.

He beat his breast with his clenched fist and vowed to God and the Virgin that if his prayer were answered and a son born to him that day, he would give one fifth of his yield of olives to the church, that the oil might be burned on the altars to the Bestower of Life.

He crossed himself devoutly. He rose stiffly to his feet. He clicked his heels together as cavalierly as his wounded knee would permit. He flung his cloak of black cloth over his arm and strode to the cathedral door, where he donned the spurs he had left there the night before when he entered the house of God.

Dawn was tinting the tips of the Carpetanos as Don Fulano de Suarez, mounting his Andalusian two-year-old, Fuegito (Little Fire), cantered away toward his home, beneath the tall poplars and fluttering aspens that lined the Alameda, cantered hopefully home to learn if his prayer had been granted.

The house of Don de Suarez faced the *plazuela.* It was a house of three stories like most of its neighbors in the narrow streets, its exterior gleaming white in the sun, its floors given over, as were all houses in Plasencia, the first to kitchen, stables, and servants; the second to family living; the third to *dormitorios.*

The house of the Suarez had but one door, as was customary in that day and age. "The house with two doors is poorly guarded," ran the proverb of the time, when seven centuries of war and three thousand odd battles made security of home a thing to be greatly desired. The one fortress-like door was studded by

constellations of great, hand-wrought iron nails, picking out the arms of the Suarez. The few windows that looked toward the street were strengthened by iron bars. It was a house secure from invaders.

As the ring of Fuegito's heels sounded on the cobbled road, the studded door swung back into the wide paved courtyard. Barefooted old Pancho hurried out to receive the reins from his master's hands and the spurs from his master's heels. A sleeping beggar at the doorway roused himself to accept the alms from the *hidalgo's* purse. Luz, the helpmeet of old Pancho, in bright red petticoat with green bodice laced over her sagging bosom, received the enormous black sombrero from her master's head. Luz set up a chatter, but her master, who knew her failing for conversation, silenced her with a gesture and strode off across the courtyard. Then the heavy door swung back on its hinges and the world was shut outside.

Across the rough flags of the courtyard Don Fulano's heels gave a musical sound. They clicked against the old stone stairs as he mounted the two flights to the *dormitorio* of his wife to learn if his son had been born.

But whether God in his wisdom knew that the yield of olives would be scarce that year in Spain, or whether in his wrath he chastened the *hidalgo* for certain sins of the flesh of which Doña Elena was unaware, the child that came to the house of the Suarez that day was no son but a daughter, with wide staring eyes, with soft chestnut ringlets on her moist brow and the resolute nose of Don Ruy, the Cid, well featured on her infant face.

"Mira tu!" whispered the spouse of the *hidalgo* as her *caballero* drew near to her curtained bed. "She

has the nose of the Cid. She will have a will of her own." And the Madonna eyes of Doña Elena looked up from the child at her breast to her spouse—her lord.

Her lord and spouse halted midway between door and bed.

"She!" he roared, and his voice was like thunder in the Carpetanos. "She! *Jesús mil veces!* What matters it whether she has a will or no will? *Que importa? Que importa?"* he shouted. "She is a girl! A girl! A *girl!"*

His face paled. He paced the floor. Backward and forward he strode, unmindful now of his wounded knee.

"All night have I prayed to Santiago that my child might be born a son," he stormed. "One fifth of the yield from my olives have I promised, for oil to burn on the altars."

Doña de Suarez' voice was low. "Our child has the nose of the Cid," she repeated, the beads of her rosary slipping through her pale fingers as she lay, wearied by her travail, her head sunk low in the pillows. "She has the nose of the Cid," she repeated once more. "She is worth all the oil on all the altars in Spain."

Don Fulano kicked a cushion of gold brocade that lay at his feet. It slid along the polished floor and struck against a cabinet at the farther end of the room, causing busts and vases to totter. One was the bust of El Cid, the Campeador.

The child in the curtained bed, yielding, no doubt, to bad example, kicked lustily with her heels and gave forth a loud cry of protest. A smile passed swiftly over

her mother's face, but the father wore the look of a storm cloud.

"So!" he roared, "it is this that comes of your listening to the *romanceros* singing their ballads of the Cid, who died five centuries ago. A girl is born to me! A girl! To spend her life at the embroidery cushion when my son should sail the seas, carrying the arms of the Suarez to far lands, bringing gold and glory to the King."

"And perhaps some *castellanos* to his father," was the thought in Doña de Suarez' mind, as her velvet eyes gazed in adoration at the child on her arm.

Yes, she had listened to the ballads of El Cid, the Campeador, as every pregnant mother in Spain of that day listened behind her barred windows while the *romanceros* in the street sang the songs of their land, hoping that her unborn child might inherit the valor of the national hero of Spain.

But of this Doña de Suarez said no more, only repeating: "She has the nose of Don Ruy. She will have a mind of her own. She will be strong and valiant."

"Girls are made for love," said her spouse. "For love and the rosary and the embroidery cushion. What matters it whether she be valiant or a coward?"

"Yet have we not heard, have not the *adivinos* prophesied that a child with the Cid's resolute nose will win every battle——"

"Battle!" scoffed the *hidalgo*. "Battle! A girl!" and with that he flung himself from the room and was seen no more in his house that day. He was drowning his sorrows at the tavern—the Copa de Oro—at the corner. And only when the ache in his knee drove him home to his bed did he return to Doña de Suarez. But

it was not until days afterward that he looked upon the face of his girl-child lying in her bed.

During that time his wife remained in her room. Even had she been strong and recovered from the travail of childbirth, she would have dined apart from her lord and master. Spanish wives of that day did not presume to sit at table with their *caballeros*. They dined apart with their children or with female members of their households, while the husbands dined with the males or ate in state, quite alone.

Yet Doña de Suarez in her room was not unmindful of her husband. She said her rosary over and over, praying that the heart of Don Fulano might be softened toward his child and that he might accept with pious resignation the will of his Heavenly Father.

The prayers of Doña Elena were answered, for when the day arrived that the daughter with the nose of the Cid should receive her name in baptism, Don Fulano de Suarez went to the cathedral with his family. He was far too good a Catholic to give scandal to Holy Mother the Church by remaining at home on such a day. He rode beside his wife in the blue velvet coach with its red leathern thongs for springs, while his child, in the arms of old Luz, rode in the carriage behind, and the godparents and other relations followed on horse or on muleback. Don Eugenio de Suarez, the father to Don Fulano, was too ill to attend the ceremony, being bedridden in his *hacienda* at Cañaveral, but the rest of the Suarez were there. So the procession wound its way to the cathedral on the Plaza Mayor.

Never in the history of Plasencia or in the memory of the good bishop who performed the baptismal cere-

mony, or of the young curate who assisted him, did the Gothic arches of the old cathedral ring with so loud a protest from an infant so reluctant to accept the baptismal vows that her sponsors accepted for her that spring day of 1512.

She screamed aloud. She clutched the air. She pulled the long curls of the good bishop who dipped holy water from the marble font, and would have pulled his nose had not a miracle prevented. For just as the bishop was about to pronounce the name by which she was to be called, the miracle occurred. Without any warning, without the aid of human hands, the bell of prophecy—the bell above the high altar—rang three long, loud peals.

The wailing child ceased her outcry and paused breathless at the sound. So did the good Bishop of Plasencia, his hand suspended above the child's head. So did Don Fulano de Suarez and Doña Elena, his wife. So did old Luz, the nurse, and the godparents, Don Carlos and Doña Catalina, and the other relations and friends. Every one of them paused breathless and stared upward at the bell above the high altar. So did the throng of Plasenciaños who came hurrying to the cathedral door. And as the people whispered together in wonder the bell ceased its ringing as suddenly as it had begun.

In that moment, when all was silent, the Bishop of Plasencia, dipping the holy water from the font, baptized the child of the house of Suarez. And the name that he gave her was Ines, which in Spanish is the same as Agnes, meaning pure and chaste.

The turtledoves were mating in the wild olive trees along the banks of the River Jerte as, the baptismal

ceremony over, the family wound homeward. Ines, curled up in the arms of Luz, her nurse, slept like a little angel—an *angelita,* as Luz called her.

All along the way the prophecy of the bell was the topic on every tongue.

"When the bell above the high altar rings of itself, it always foretells disaster," said Doña Catalina, the godmother of little Ines.

"It means death," said Don Carlos, the godfather.

"The ringing came from the west. It is there the prophecy will be fulfilled," said Doña Elena de Suarez, looking anxiously at her husband.

"From the west!" Don Fulano's face blanched. "Don Eugenio—my father—his *hacienda* at Cañaveral lies to the west."

"The bell rang three times," said old Luz. "It means that three shall die." She nodded with resignation.

That remark brought them to the fortress door, and entering through the courtyard and mounting the old stone steps, Luz placed the sleeping child in the canopied bed with the hangings of silver lace.

"She did not seem to wish to be baptized," said Luz, turning to Doña Elena.

"She has the nose of the Cid," said the mother. "She will have a mind of her own."

Don Fulano was silent. He was thinking of the prophecy of the bell.

That night a messenger on horseback came from the *hacienda* at Cañaveral. Don Eugenio, the father of Don Fulano and grandfather of little Ines, had gone with his soul to God, just as the bell had foretold.

Don Fulano nursed his grief during the long period of mourning required in the Spain of that day. The

house on the *plazuela* was darkened. The family adopted somber garb. Even the gurgle of the child, Ines, was hushed by the weight of Spanish grief, heavy, dolorous, consistent.

Two years with days dark as nights the house of the Suarez mourned, while along the roads of Extremadura marched the feet of the adventurous, their boot-heels ringing on the stones, their pennons fluttering in the breeze, their plumed casques gleaming in the sun.

And ever the tales ran the same. "There are more lands being discovered, lands peopled by infidels, who eat from golden vessels and drink from golden goblets. Gold is cheaper in the new world than are acorns in Extremadura."

Don Fulano pondered these tales while nursing his grief and his olives. The wound in his knee grew better. His period of mourning drew to a close.

"Why should I remain in Spain," he asked himself at length, "nursing my wounds and my ducats?" (For with the death of Don Eugenio, the rents from his estates fell to his son.) "Two hundred ducats a year," he mused, "if the sheep and the swine are productive. Enough and to spare for a wife and a child who should have been born a son. But for a *caballero* of Spain? Pah! While gold flows like wine in far lands! Two hundred ducats, indeed. Such a sum is fit only for women!"

His period of mourning ended, Don Fulano's mind was made up. And, as if to prove Divine sanction, even as his decision was reached, Spain was fired with new frenzy. A traveler from Seville bound for Valladolid brought the news to Plasencia.

A hitherto unknown sea had been discovered. By

an Extremeño, no less. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, from Xeres de Caballeros, had discovered the Mar del Sur. There could be no doubt of the truth of the tale. The Mar del Sur (Sea of the South) had been discovered by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, while climbing the mountains on the Isthmus of Darien. With him in his discovery was Francisco Pizarro, another from Extremadura. In September of 1513 the discovery had been made. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, armed with his sword and his buckler, had gone down into the waters, and wading thigh deep, had taken possession of this Sea of the South in the name of Christ and the King. Yet, so slowly did he travel, it was January of the following year before the expedition returned to Darien in the Isthmus. Three months more it had taken the news to reach Spain. And now it was May, 1514, and Spain was once more thrilled at the report of the sea with its promise of lands beyond.

"Every Extremeño will be going now," Don Fulano told his wife. "Yes, every Extremeño will be going, for the Mar del Sur is salted with gold. There will be left hardly one little mule in all Extremadura; hardly one little mule."

That was the last time Don Fulano spoke of adventure or of the world beyond the waters, but he furbished up his armor that he had worn at the battle of Oran, and when the next squadron sailed from San Lúcar it carried him on his great adventure to the new world. A new world it was, indeed, for Don Fulano de Suarez; a world far, far beyond the waters, because never again in Spain, never in Extremadura, never in Plasencia, the beautiful, was word received of Don Fulano, the father of Ines Suarez. Nor of any of those

who sailed with him, with plumes in their crests and scarfs across their breasts and the cry of *"Cristo y Santiago!"* on their red Spanish lips. They had sailed on their great adventure.

Doña Elena received the tidings from the new world but waited in vain for word of her *caballero,* and before the year had ended she went to join him. The beads of her rosary slipped for the last time through her pale hands and Ines Suarez was left an orphan with great, wide, wondering eyes, with restless hands and eager pattering feet and with the resolute nose of El Cid, the Campeador, on her inquiring baby face.

Thus the prophecy of the bell was fulfilled—the bell that had rung three times—for Don Eugenio, the grandfather; for Don Fulano, the father, and for Doña Elena, the mother, of Ines Suarez, the valiant.

The godparents, Don Carlos and Doña Catalina, fulfilling their baptismal vows, assumed the spiritual charge of their godchild, but it was old Luz, the nurse, and old Pancho, the groom, who guarded the fortress door and the existence of its youthful owner; while Ines Suarez, fulfilling the prophecy of the *adivinos* as to one born with the nose of the Cid, developed a mind and a will of her own.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SAINT WHO RODE ON HORSEBACK

THE fundamentals of life, of morals, of religion, were taught to Ines Suarez by her godparents, Don Carlos and Doña Catalina, but it was old Luz, her nurse, who dressed them with the embellishments of romance.

Old Luz did not know an *a* from a *zeta* but she knew every bead of her rosary and every saint's day on the calendar. She could not make a scratch of a quill, but she could recite all day the romances of Spain—of El Cid, the Campeador, who could slay twenty Moors at a stroke and bring back the heads of his victims as souvenirs to his ladies.

Old Luz had never been farther from Plasencia than the gateway that led to Coria, but she knew all the gossip of the Court. Could she not listen by the fountain while the servants of the city took down their pitchers from their shoulders and retailed the gossip heard in the halls of their masters?

The gossip of the Court passed lightly over the head of little Ines. The Court was far away, in Valladolid, and—be it known—was far more Flemish than Spanish under the reign of the fair-haired Charles the Fifth.

It was romance with which Ines was concerned and by which her soul was fed. Told from the lips of old Luz in the peace of a Spanish night, when polished

stars glinted through iron-barred windows and the singsong of the watchman outside announced the hour of night and the state of the weather, these romances became her world.

"Twenty-one o'clock and all is serene," the town crier would chant while old Luz, for the hundredth time, repeated the romance of Don Ruy, the Cid; how he had slain Count Lozano and brought back his head for a souvenir; how he had refused to accept the hand of Jimena Gomez, daughter of his victim, until he had won five more battles.

Sometimes the tale was religious, the story of Santiago, patron saint of Spain, that Luz repeated, placing around the neck of little Ines the statue of Santiago mounted on his silver horse, his cross-hilted sword in his hand.

Indeed, though Luz was unaware of it, there was much confusion in the mind of little Ines as to the identity of these two heroes, Santiago and El Cid. So her childish imagination welded the two into one, and when she fell asleep at night, she dreamed of a composite hero—a saint who could ride on horseback with his cross-hilted sword in his hand and kill twenty Moors at a stroke, bringing back the heads of his victims and refusing to marry until he had won five more battles.

Even had Luz been aware of it, she would have thought nothing of such confusion. In the sixteenth century it was a confusion common to the mind of Spain, adult as well as infant, this welding of soldier and saint as hero.

It was an age of confusion, for in that day the warrior was a saint, the saint was a soldier, while the King

(An engraving from the portrait by Titian. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America)

CHARLES THE FIFTH, OF SPAIN

of Spain, who represented on earth the Militant King of Heaven, was, in the eyes of his subjects, a mixture of saint and hero.

In such an age Ines Suarez grew until, at the age of eight, she was, herself, a strange mingling of religion and romance, with a hunger and thirst for adventure born of the spirit of her age.

A strange, elfin little creature she must have been, with heavy chestnut braids bobbing behind her as she darted, quick as a cat and with much the same sinuous motion, through the halls of her fortress home or—on occasional visits to the *hacienda* of her godparents—through the thyme-scented fields of Cañaveral.

Her alert, eager eyes were brown, with little glints of green, like flecks of sunlight on the dark pools of the River Jerte. Her carnation-red lips parted in quick, flashing smiles, showing the canine whiteness of her teeth. Her cheeks, pale gold, bore no tinge of color, for all her robust health. Her nose—the resolute nose, which was called the nose of the Cid—was broad, generous, inclining to aquiline, giving strength to the delicate oval of her face.

She must have been somewhat of a problem to her godparents when, on those occasional visits, she exercised her passion for action, by leaping on the backs of unbroken colts, by shearing the wool from the sides of young sheep, by forming the turkey-cocks into ranks like opposing armies and pitting them one against the other to see which were the better fighters.

Indeed, had she not indulged her passion for activity, she would have found life dull enough in Extremadura, cut off from the rest of the world, except when a trav-

eler from Lisbon to Madrid or from Seville to Salamanca, paused for a change of horse.

Little she would have learned of adventure from the shepherds of León or Castile who came up from the lowlands every year at the approach of summer, returning to the lowlands again when the winds blew chill from the mountains. An unadventurous lot, these shepherds, uncommunicative as the flocks they tended and in whose skins they were dressed. It was sometimes difficult to tell whether they were sleeping or waking, so fixed and still they stood, leaning on their crooks, fit rather for the brush of a painter or the pen of a poet of Spain than food for an adventure-hungry child.

Had it not been for Luz, who drank in romance and adventure as the dry roads of Extremadura drank in rain, who babbled tales of enchantment as the Jerte babbled over the rocks where old women pounded their washing, life would have been dull enough for Ines.

But there came a day when even the shepherds on the hills were stirred to adventure. A voyager returned from the seas. Swinging along the road from Lisbon to Madrid, he knocked at the fortress door of the Suarez and begged in the name of God a bowl of *olla podrida.* And letting his *olla* grow cold, he told a tale of adventure that swept like wildfire through the land.

"Hernando Cortés from Medellín has conquered a land called Mexico," he told them. "There animals have silver horns and birds have golden wings; there rivers sparkle with pearls, and diamonds grow on the hills—and golden pebbles, larger than the turkey eggs of Spain, are hauled in by fishermen in their nets."

Then the shepherds dropped their crooks and the

sheep roamed at will on the hills, and Ines Suarez, searching in the garret of her fortress home, found a sword with a rusty blade and a cross at its hilt. She bound it by a belt to her slender waist. The point scraped the ground as she marched soldier-like into the presence of old Luz in the kitchen.

"I shall fight for the King when I am grown," said Ines.

"Yes," agreed old Luz. "You have the nose of the Cid. You will be strong and valiant."

A question arose in Ines' mind, for though she had seen many a soldier march away from Plasencia bound for adventure and the new world, she did not remember ever to have seen one woman go with them.

She asked old Luz about it, and Luz said: "A woman is a soldier of Christ. She must fight for the soul. She must bring souls to the Church."

Thus all her problems were brought to Luz, who answered without evasion. Never a question was asked, but Luz gave a ready answer. The mysteries of life were unfolded. Ines saw young lambs on the hillside suckling at the swollen udders of the ewes. Watching closer, she beheld other and deeper mysteries—of life, of conception, of birth—performed before her eyes. And always when she asked questions Luz gave her the answer, bluntly, crudely perhaps, but always without evasion.

Death only remained an unsolved mystery—death and the Kingdom of God, which was the far pasture whither the dead went. Ines wondered about her parents—about her father, whom she remembered only as a voice, firm and fearless and brave; about her mother, whom she remembered only as a touch, gentle,

delicate, kind. She had been told by old Luz that both had gone to the Kingdom of God, yet one had gone in a ship bound for the world across the seas, and the other had gone down to the earth bound for the Kingdom of God. And there arose in the mind of Ines Suarez the same confusion about the earth and the sea and the Kingdom of God that there had been about the saint and the soldier.

Old Luz could not make it clear why sometimes people returned from the sea, yet no one returned from the Kingdom of God.

Ines determined to find out for herself, so one day when on a visit to the *hacienda* of her godparents, she took her rusty sword into the sheepfold, and slashing at the head of one of the young rams, all but severed it from its body.

Remonstrated with, she wiped the blood from her sword, saying she wanted to see what would happen when a soul went to God.

"But the ram has no soul," explained Uncle Carlos, which was no explanation at all.

"Then he must die," said Ines simply. "For he is a heretic and the sooner he goes to God the sooner he will receive a soul."

And all the explanation of her uncle did not make it clear why people with souls sometimes returned from the sea but none from the Kingdom of God. Ever the answer was the same. It was not important that she understand, it was important only that she believe and bring others to believe until every heretic was brought to Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

AN ACT OF FAITH

BUT if the heretics do not wish to be brought to Christ, what then?" asked Ines, the green glints in her brown eyes sparkling like sunlight on dark pools.

"It makes no difference," old Luz told her. "You must bring them just the same. You did not seem to wish to be baptized when you received your name. Yet the good bishop baptized you just the same. Heretics are poor unbaptized children. They must be brought to the dear Christ. Dead or alive, it is the same, they must be brought. It matters not what happens to their bodies, so long as their souls go to God."

Old Luz, talking in the year 1520, voiced the belief of Spain. Her face was radiant. Her bright eyes shone with holy fire. So long as souls were saved, nothing else mattered.

For seven hundred years Spain had been under the yoke of Islam, struggling to raise the cross. Now that the Moors were defeated, by the help of Christ and Santiago, now that the heathen yoke had been tossed from Spain's shoulders, the crescent barred from the land, the cross and the crown were triumphant. Now Spain must show others the way! It must Christianize the world.

And now, Hernando Cortés had conquered a land

called Mexico! He had brought glory to himself but greater glory to the King of Spain. The adoration for their King, which from times remote had been to the Spaniards a religion, became now a frenzy.

The acquisition of Mexico, together with the islands previously discovered, meant but one thing to a nation of King-worshipers. The ruler of so great an empire must be more than mortal. He must be a god upon earth. God had reserved the heavens for himself, but to Carlos, the Fifth, he had given the government of the world.

It was for this that Cristóbal Colón, the Italian, carrying the flag of Spain, had discovered heretic lands. For this Hernando Cortés had conquered the land called Mexico. For this Vasco Nuñez de Balboa had discovered the Mar del Sur, with its promise of more lands beyond. For this Francisco Pizarro from Trujillo was embarking from the Isthmus of Darien on a voyage for the Mar del Sur. That there should not be left one spot in all the earth that did not acknowledge the King of Spain; that there should not be left one heretic on earth whose soul was not brought to Christ. So the Spaniards reasoned; so the people of Extremadura planned.

It was for Plasencia to do its share. So said Don Carlos and Doña Catalina, his wife. So agreed Pancho and old Luz.

"And what if Plasenciaños fail?" asked Ines, seated on the carved leather chair in the *sala* of her fortress home, looking out through the unglazed windows at the hills lying hot in the sun. For the month was August, the hottest, driest August known to the memory of the oldest inhabitant in Plasencia.

Luz, her nurse, her housekeeper, her guardian, her counselor, made answer.

"Extremeños must not fail, lest God send some punishment; lest some plague fall upon our land."

Soon it was the hour of *siesta* and the house of the Suarez, like every other house in Plasencia, was silent as a tomb, but lacking a tomb's sweet coolness, for in the fortress house of the Suarez the heat of that August day was stifling.

In the narrow cobbled streets below, heat waves rose from the pavements and filled the air like a surging sea. Not a leaf stirred on the poplar trees along the Alameda. Even the aspens were still. No breath of moisture appeared on the surface of the earthen *búcaros* dangling from hooks in the windows.

Yet, so strong was habit in Spain, little Ines on her couch with its silver hangings slept a child's deep sleep, while old Luz on the *tapete* near the door guarded her charge asleep as awake, and down in the courtyard old Pancho slept huddled in an angle of the walls.

While thus Plasencia slept, a hot wind from the southwest stirred the tremulous aspens. The poplar trees swayed slightly. The *búcaros* in the windows began a rhythmic swinging on their hooks. Old Luz stirred in her sleep.

A noise of the humming of insects sounded on the summer air; a far-away sound at first, then drawing nearer and nearer.

Old Luz stumbled to her feet, and rubbing her eyes, approached the window. The sound increased in volume. A dark cloud appeared in the distance.

Louder and louder came the sound. The dark cloud

drew nearer and nearer. It obscured the sun, graying the summer air.

Little Ines' eyes popped open. She rose from her couch and stood beside the old woman at the window.

"Que paso!" (What happens!) she questioned.

The old woman dropped to her knees. Pancho in the courtyard unbarred the fortress door and rushed into the street. The cobbled roadway was filled with excited neighbors beating their breasts and their foreheads, looking up at the dark cloud that drew nearer and nearer and from which a loud rasping sound increased momentarily in volume until, to the excited Plasenciaños, it seemed a deafening noise.

The dark cloud, appearing brown as it drew nearer, became elongated and spread itself out along the banks of the river. The sound of rasping, scraping was as if all the fallen angels of Inferno were beating their wings against the bars.

"What is it? What is it?" queried Ines.

"It is the plague!" murmured old Luz, her voice scarcely rising above a whisper. "It is the *langosta"* (the locust).

It was indeed a plague of locusts and, as the great cloud settled down on aspen and poplar, on field of corn and hillside pasture, on olive grove and oak, a rain of locusts seemed to drop from heaven.

The men of Plasencia went about the streets beating the insects down with boughs and with cloths, with besoms and clubs, while the women remained at home and prayed. One method availed as little as the other, for when the second morning came Plasencia lay stark and stripped.

(From an old print. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America)

AN AUTO-DA-FÉ OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION

Showing the procession of heretics and the pronouncement of judgment.

"Mira tu!" exclaimed little Ines. "Look! The leaves have gone from my tree!"

Old Luz went into the courtyard. The leaves of the almond tree were gone, so was the grass from the hillside pasture and the little blades that had grown between the courtyard flags. The trees along the banks of the Jerte flung their stripped branches into the August air where two days before they had risen cool and green in their summer garb. Only the red tomato, with its pungent green leaves, had escaped the plague.

"María Purissima!" exclaimed Luz. "The plague has, indeed, come upon us."

"We must make atonement," said old Pancho. "It is the only way."

Yes, every Plasenciaño was sure that God had sent down his wrath in the form of a plague of locusts, that the people should be warned and atone for their sins of omission and of commission.

That night Ines Suarez slept with the little silver statue of Santiago tightly clenched in her hand. So did many an older person, and in the morning they were awakened at daylight by the ringing of many bells. Every church bell in Plasencia clanged with its most insistent tone.

Ines sprang from her bed and, as usual, sought old Luz for the answer. Why were the bells ringing so early? Was this a day of atonement?

Old Luz, already up and dressed, was saying her beads before the altar in her room.

"Is it a day of atonement or is it a *fiesta* day?" asked Ines.

"It is a day of *fiesta,*" old Luz replied, "the greatest

of all *fiestas*. It is the day of the *auto-da-fé*—the act of faith of the heretics. Sixteen dogs of infidels must be burned today in Plasencia. Already the crowds are gathering in the Plaza Mayor before the cathedral." The eyes of old Luz gleamed with religious fire.

"Sixteen!" exclaimed Ines. "So many? And will they not suffer pain?"

"Of a certainty," agreed old Luz, "but only through pain can their souls be saved, and the wrath of God and the locusts be swept from our land."

"Sixteen!" Ines repeated, and one more question. "But burning by the fire gives much torture. Do you not remember when I burned my foot at the *brasero,* and the torture I felt?"

"Of a certainty," nodded old Luz. "That is part of the punishment. Always in the courts they give torture when anyone is punished, and this is only by fire—and death by the fire comes quickly."

Old Luz spoke the sentiment of her age. Always in the courts they gave torture—in England—in Rome—in Spain. It was a part of judicial procedure, recognized throughout civilized lands, and the torture in secular courts was far more cruel than burning.

"Death by the fire comes quickly," repeated old Luz, and added: "What matter, if the soul goes to God, whether the body suffer pain? Come; you must dress. For this is the day of *fiesta.*"

"Will Carlos, the King, be there?" asked Ines.

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no. Who knows? But the *gobernador* and his lady will be there."

"Santiago also?" persisted Ines, fondling her little silver statue.

"He will be there in the spirit," replied Luz, "though with our mortal eyes we may not see him. But he will be there just the same."

Little Ines lost no time in dressing for the *fiesta* at which those who were not of the true Church might sacrifice their poor mortal bodies that their souls should be purged of their sins and go the sooner to God.

Nothing less ceremonious than her lilac silk dress with its embroidery of gold and silver thread would serve for so auspicious an occasion. The stiff upstanding collar scratched her tender young throat. The heavily lined sleeves, with their oversleeves and the overcape that fell to the floor, dragged at her slender young shoulders. The full, heavily lined, and heavily embroidered skirt weighed down her young hips and scraped against her soft kid sandals. But it swayed with a grown-up rhythm as she walked, and neither the scratching of its gold threads nor the suffocating heaviness of its thick folds in the heat of the August morning, could outweigh such rhythmic swaying. Moreover, she was going to a *fiesta!* The greatest of all *fiestas* in that day—the *auto-da-fé* of the heretics.

The narrow *calles* of Plasencia were alive with people hurrying to the great square in front of the cathedral, where the platform was in readiness for the ceremony.

Old men leaning on their staffs wiped their rheumy eyes the better to see the sights as they plodded along the cobbled road. Old women with backs bent from perpetual worship of the God they soon would meet, fumbled their beads as they passed. Young mothers with babes at their breasts; young girls with glowing

eyes; children toddling beside their elders, hurried to the Plaza Mayor. Few were the young men in that hurrying throng. Few were the young men, or even men of middle age, in Plasencia that day. The wars in Italy, the sea, the adventure of newly discovered lands, had well-nigh depopulated Plasencia. Those who remained hurried to the scene of the *auto-da-fé* as if it were all that remained for them to do for Christ and the King.

As Ines hurried along beside old Luz she heard a booming of guns and the sound of trumpet and drum. The cathedral bells changed their tempo to the slow toll of death.

From the prison of the Inquisition a body of troops emerged, their pennoned lances held before them, the sunlight shining on casque and shield. Their leather boots creaked as they marched, the green flag of the King waved on high.

The friars in long robes came next, and later the agents of the Inquisition. Between them marched the sixteen condemned, their loose sacks of yellow flapping about their trembling knees, their tall pasteboard caps on heads held unnaturally high. As they passed, the crowds along the fringes of the road crossed themselves with fervor, but the yellow-garbed victims marched on in sacks adorned with figures of devils fanning painted flames.

Around their necks hung cords, and in their hands they carried crucifixes inverted as a sign of imminent death.

"How thin they are, and how hollow of eye, as if they have long kept vigil." This was the thought in the

mind of old Luz, who dropped to her knees as the procession passed by. Ines followed her example, though the act of kneeling in the lilac dress was the supreme test of devotion.

Ines' head bowed low as the procession passed her, so close that the coarse yellow sacks of the condemned brushed the folds of her frock. She felt a light touch on her head, and looking up as the procession halted for a moment, saw only a condemned woman—a young woman—with eyes that seemed to burn to her soul, and with her pale white hand extended as if in benediction.

Had she only imagined it, or did the woman's hand touch her hair? Ines wondered, and wondered, too, if she should not anoint the spot with holy water to remove so profane a touch. She turned her head to see if Luz had observed, but the old servant's head was bent in prayer, while the woman with the burning eyes and the pale, pale hands moved her lips ever so slightly and smiled a faint ghost of a smile.

The lips of Ines parted in a reluctant, involuntary smile. Perhaps the woman was a mother with a little girl of her own; and she going to be burnt that her soul might go sooner to God.

Then as the procession moved on Ines crossed herself, and bowing her head low, she lifted the little silver statue to her hair and passed the mounted Santiago over the spot where the pale white hand had so profanely rested.

The *alcalde* of Plasencia, with his staff of office in his hand, followed the yellow-garbed figures. After him came the bishop, in robe of violet and white, after

him the priests, carrying the Host, and after them the nobles.

The members of the Inquisition mounted the platform in the plaza. The two Inquisitors took their seats on the dais. The prosecutor stood before the crimson velvet chair. The *alcalde* and his lady, the nobles and the noblewomen, settled themselves for a long session. The guns boomed. A priest chanted the mass. The bishop preached an endless sermon.

Old Luz, leading Ines by the hand, elbowed her way through the throng, found a position near where the nobles were gathered, and then lifting Ines to a seat on the floor of the platform, as befitted the daughter of an *hidalgo,* stood below with the servants and the throng of Plasencia's poor.

All day from sunrise until well past sixteen o'clock, the Inquisition lasted. One by one the names of the victims were called. One by one the accusations against them were read, the endless sermons preached. Opportunity was given each victim to profess the true faith. One or two confessed and acknowledged the true Church. They, mercifully, were permitted to be strangled before being consigned to the flames. The others were sentenced to die by burning.

Some of the victims were old, and took their sentences calmly. An hour more of life, a day, a year—what did it matter when they went? Or how? They had lived; they had loved; they must die; the ends of the circle must meet.

Some of the victims were young, but oh, so weary of torture. The flames could not last forever, and already their limbs were numb.

One young woman's hands twitched nervously. They

were pale hands, the hands that had touched Ines' hair. Ines sat directly in front of her, staring with curious eyes. The woman lifted her trembling hand to her pale trembling lips, then kissed her fingers and smiled. They were the fingers that had rested a moment on Ines' chestnut hair.

Once more the child flashed an answering smile that her lips could not control, but seeing old Luz regarding her from the pavement below, she drooped her lashes, and lifting the little silver statue of Santiago, she pressed it to her lips, to purge them no doubt. Then as the priests of the Inquisition rose, the condemned woman passed forever from her sight.

Old Luz lifted her down from the platform. A red glow appeared outside the city walls. Yet it was too early for sunset.

Slowly Ines followed old Luz back to the fortress house with the nail constellations in the door.

"No one was burned after all," said Ines regretfully. "I thought you said sixteen people would be burned."

"Outside the city walls the burning takes place," said old Luz. "But it is much too far to walk, and the day is very hot. We have done enough for today. Another time we will go to the burning."

"But will not Santiago punish us if we do not go to the burning just because the day is hot?" She remembered the red glow outside the walls of the city, and turning her head, looked longingly back.

"We have done enough for today," was all old Luz replied.

"Some day when I am grown up, I shall burn a great many heretics," said Inez. "Then everyone

must come to the burning. Perhaps I shall cut off their heads, too, twenty at a single stroke."

"You have the nose of El Cid," replied old Luz proudly. "You will be strong and valiant."

Ines nodded her head and fingered the statue of Santiago.

CHAPTER FOUR

A COURIER TALKS IN THE TAVERN

THOSE were perplexing days when Ines Suarez was young; perplexing for those who were old and for those with life still before them.

Life was full of mystery. One could be sure of nothing except one's immortal soul. One's very foothold on the earth was being swept away. One went to mass of a morning or to do penance in the cathedral, confident that the earth was flat like the tableland of Extremadura—flat and stationary and secure. One returned from saying the stations to learn that men were telling that the earth was round like an orange and turned about like a dervish or an Andalusian dancer, and that only by the grace of God and the practice of many penances could one keep from whirling into space.

Had not men proved it by sailing the ocean round, going westward from San Lúcar and drifting back three years later without once retracing their course? Three years of sailing westward and they had arrived back at the selfsame port from which they had gone gallantly out. The selfsame port, but never the selfsame men. So thin and emaciated were they that even their wives did not know them. It was a question if they knew each other—if they knew themselves—so

much they had suffered, so far they had gone, so many lands they had seen.

A mapmaker in the *taberna* was talking of it—a courier bound from Seville to the King at Valladolid. An Extremeño, too, and therefore more likely to be believed than some of the braggart Portuguese who had actually made the voyage with him.

Ines Suarez heard the mapmaker tell the story while the groom changed horses in the courtyard of the tavern. Not that the courtyard of the tavern was any place for a child of ten. But old Luz was doing her penance at the cathedral and Ines on her way home from mass paused at the door of the tavern. A King's messenger was not seen every day in the city of Plasencia, nor one with a like tale to tell, and a map showing land and water.

So Ines drew near to the stranger and the men grouped around him in the courtyard. Her chin was cupped in her hands and her brown eyes with their glints of green sparkled with curiosity.

"The earth is round," repeated the mapmaker, "round as an orange of Valencia and wholly surrounded by water. The mystery of it all is how we have remained on it as long as we have."

He drew the map from his saddlebags and with the end of a knife retraced the route of the voyagers, westward and south from San Lúcar. Then, curling the map like a cone in his hand he circled his hand about it until he touched San Lúcar once more.

The tavernkeeper stood with arms akimbo. So did the loiterers in the yard. Little Ines uncupped her hands from her chin and placed one on each slender hip.

"If anyone else told such a tale," said the tavernkeeper, "I would argue it *por y contra.* But what is the word of a tavernkeeper when the courier of his Majesty speaks?" So saying, he bowed low from the waist while the courier continued his story. From then on the mapmaker talked without interruption, speaking as one in a dream delivering a sermon, while the tavernkeeper and the idlers in the yard let their arms hang limp at their sides, and the groom with his mouth half open forgot to saddle the horse. Little Ines stood as one fascinated, understanding less than half of the tale, but the more fascinated for the less she understood.

"It was not for the new continent the *Victoria* set sail down the muddy waters of the Guadalquivir. There were four other vessels, she making five in all. It was the Indias they sought, the Indias with their spices and diamonds, their ivories, their perfumes, their porcelain. They found the Indias and more, and here they are back in San Lúcar and the year is September, fifteen twenty-two, and they having been gone three years, have completely circled the earth.

"Of course Cristóbal Colón, may God rest his soul, believed the earth to be round, but no one else believed it—the Church did not believe it—and no one had proved it until now.

"Two hundred and fifty men went forth under the Spanish flag with Hernando de Magallanes, though a Portuguese, as commander of the fleet. But only eighteen have returned, whose very wives did not know them, who hardly knew each other, so much they have suffered, so far they have been, so many lands they have seen."

Thus the mapmaker spoke that morning in the court-

yard of the tavern, while the tavernkeeper and the idlers stood with arms akimbo and little Ines, unnoticed, stood silently near at hand.

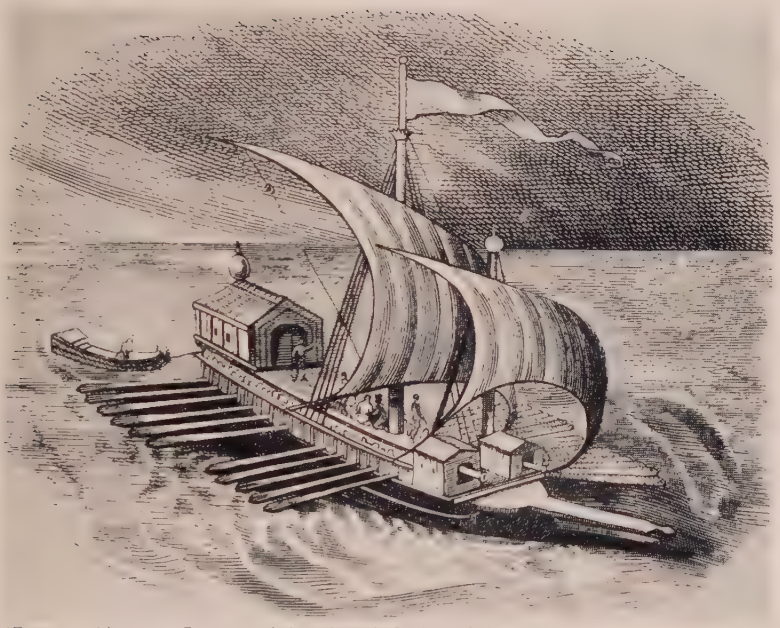
He told how the five vessels had sailed gayly out from San Lúcar that September day in 1519. Two hundred and fifty men in all, but only eighteen came back. Only the *Victoria* circled the earth.

He named the vessels one by one. First was the *San Antonio,* with its one hundred and twenty tons burden. The *Trinidad* was next in size, with one hundred and twenty tons, and Hernando de Magallanes himself in command, the flag of Spain flying from the masthead. Then there was the *Concepción* with its ninety tons and its men; the *Victoria* of eighty-five tons and the *Santiago* of seventy-five.

"Plenty of barter, too," said the mapmaker, "quicksilver and vermilion and alum; colored fabrics and caps. Copper and knives from Toledo; combs of tortoiseshell and bone; looking-glasses to stir the vanity of the heathen and twenty-five thousand bells, large and small, to summon the heretics to Christ. Five shiploads of men and barter. But only the *Victoria* came back."

He told how Magallanes' ship was in the lead as they steered from San Lúcar for the Canaries. They were warned not to lose sight of each other but to follow the captain's flag by day, and by night to follow the lantern kept burning in the stern of the *Trinidad.*

He told how they had reached the Canaries, pausing a few days for supplies, and how, setting sail again, they steered southward along the coast of Africa between the mainland and the Cape Verde Islands. Up to this time they had enjoyed fair weather and



(From an old print. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America)

A SPANISH GALLEY UNDER SAIL

smooth seas. But as they pushed farther south terrific storms arose, so they changed their course to the southwestward, skirting the mainland of the continent to the west, pausing for fruits, for fish, for fowls and such foods as they could obtain from the natives in exchange for their knives, their combs, their little bells.

He told how they reached the estuary of the Plata, or River of Silver, which they called the *Mar Dulce* (Sweet Sea), where the natives in their huts ate from silver plates and drank from silver goblets.

He told how they continued toward the south and paused in the Bay of San Julian; how the storms came upon them and the cold, but of how they had seen a race of giants who covered their bodies with skins and made huge footprints in the sands. "Patones" or "Patagones" (the clumsy-footed ones) Hernando de Magallanes had called them.

The mapmaker paused a moment, but the idlers in the tavern begged him to go on; so did the tavernkeeper, while Ines Suarez held her breath, wishing to hear more of the giants.

But the mapmaker was telling of the mutiny of the sailors in the Port of San Julian, and of the triumph of Magallanes in quelling the mutiny. And then in a voice so low that Ines heard only now and then a word, he spoke of the punishment and the execution, and the bodies of the mutineers hanging from the arms of the sails, and of one who was left behind at the mercy of the giants.

And though Ines did not hear all, her eyes grew round and dark at that which she did hear; but the mapmaker went on to other things.

"They did not pause long with the giants," he said,

"for the cold was intense, so they continued on to the south, rounding the cape of the Virgins and the Dugenes. And then on the first day of November, which, mark you, was summer in that strange land, they reached the mouth of a strait. Todos los Santos, they named it, because that was the day on which it was discovered—the Feast Day of all the Saints. They could not know that they had reached the southernmost part of a continent, as the wise ones now are saying. They thought it merely an island with camp fires dottings its shores. So they called it Tierra del Fuego (the Land of Fire).

"Nor did they tarry here because provisions were running low and some still greatly feared the giants. It was then their commander Magallanes called a council of his captains and some said: 'Let us go home. We have found the strait and the passage to the Indies. Let us return to our homes and come back next year with a larger and better flotilla.' But Magallanes said: 'We will finish this voyage if we are forced to eat our guts,' and with a shot from the cannon he gave the order to go forward."

Then the mapmaker told how that night the *San Antonio* slipped away in the darkness, and another of the ships sprung a leak and later had to be abandoned. So there remained but three of the vessels to journey on to the west.

And what a voyage it was! The mapmaker's voice grew husky in the telling. The tavernkeeper clucked his tongue and the heads of the idlers were wagging, while Ines Suarez drew nearer and nearer, her eyes glowing like great dark pools in the sun.

She heard how the water in the casks gave out, and

how the storms disturbed the peaceful Pacifico, for after they emerged from the strait they found themselves on a broad ocean; how a hurricane came up and all would have been lost had it not been for María Santissima, to whom they prayed and who miraculously saved them when all hands had given up for death.

She heard how when morning came and the *Victoria* and the *Trinidad* were saved, their commander Hernando de Magallanes gave the order to continue on toward the west. They had no water in their casks and their food was rancid and sour. But their souls were fed by God and their bodies were fed by prayer. And when they had eaten the last of their food, moldy and sour though it was, there were plenty of rats in the hold and nourishment in the leather of the empty wineskins.

It was three months more, so the mapmaker said, before they reached the islands of San Lazarus and disembarked on one of them, which was called by the natives Mactan. There they went in search of provisions and sweet water. But so weak had they become in body and in spirit that they were easy prey for the natives.

"It was then," the mapmaker said, and he crossed himself as he said it, "that Hernando de Magallanes was killed by the warlike natives, and a number of his companions also. The others escaped with their lives and with sweet water in their casks and some bread and fruits in their lockers."

So Sebastian del Cano took the helm as pilot of the *Victoria* and the *Trinidad,* abandoned as unseaworthy, was left behind as they sailed westward again. But

they reached a rich archipelago and filled the hold with spices and cloves, and they visited the continental Indias and secured ivory and diamonds and porcelain. And crossing the Indian Ocean, they circled the continent of Africa and even while they were praying they arrived once more in San Lúcar, three years almost to the day from the time they had departed.

They had found the Straits of Todos los Santos, which would forever be known by the name of the dead commander, the Straits of Magallanes, which unites the two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific. And they had reached the Indias, and so by keeping constantly to the westward had completely passed around the earth, which they had proved to be round like an orange.

The mapmaker traced it all on his parchment, so that even the tavernkeeper could not argue against it.

"And if any man doubts," said the mapmaker, "let him go down to Sevilla, where he will be convinced by talking to the men who made the voyage." Then he displayed some of the documents, letters, and affidavits from the men, and specimens of the ivory and porcelain, diamonds and spices, which he was carrying to the King at Valladolid.

With that his story was finished, and gathering up his exhibits he rolled his map and put it in the *alforja* of his saddle, while his diamonds and ivory he placed in his purse. Then mounting, he gave spur to his horse.

Ines Suarez remembered with a start that Luz would have finished her stations, so turning her face toward home she ran as fleet as a fawn or a cat, and with the

same sinuous catlike motion, making scarcely more noise than her shadow.

When Luz returned, her knees stiff and sore from much praying, she found Ines seated in her little chair with its slung seat of carved leather, and tilted back on its legs to see if the earth turning round might jar her suddenly into space.

Yes, those were perplexing days when Ines Suarez was young.

CHAPTER FIVE

ONE OF THESE DAYS I SHALL GO

FROM Plasencia to Valladolid was less than fifty leagues, five days' journey for one who took it leisurely, and less than that by fleet horse or tireless mule. *"Una legua, una hora"* (a league an hour) was the way the Spaniards took it, which would seem to bring it very close. Yet, in truth, heaven itself was far nearer than was Carlos the Fifth on his gold throne in Valladolid. Which was as it should be. He was their ruler, their lord, to be looked up to, to be held aloof.

The blond grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, and son of their unfortunate daughter, Juana, by her marriage to Philip, the beautiful, of the House of Hapsburg, did not reach the throne of Spain until the end of 1517. Yet, from the day of his birth, in 1500, he had been their idol, their King. When Juana, his mother, went insane, and Philip, his father, died in 1506, his grandfather, Ferdinand, ruled for young Carlos. Later, on the death of Ferdinand, Cardinal Ximenes ruled until young Carlos became of age. And when, in 1519, he was elected ruler of Germany as well as King of Spain, with the title of Carlos the Fifth, his Spanish subjects bowed down in reverence and worshiped him blindly, profoundly, fanatically.

Little enough this blond King cared for the Span-

iards. He surrounded himself with Flemings and Germans, extracting all that he could from Spain for his greater glory. And his willing subjects adored him. He was more than a man, more than their King; he was God's representative on earth. He was their ruler; their idol.

"Next to God we worship our King," was the motto of Spain of that day.

And now, in 1522, Carlos the Fifth, on his gold throne in Valladolid, learned that the earth he ruled was round like an orange. It was as Cristóbal Colón had said, though there were few who believed it at the time. But now even the Church was convinced. Hernando de Magallanes had proved it, though he lost his life in the proving. A passage to the Indias had been found. A new ocean, the Pacifico, had been crossed. Rich archipelagoes of spice had been discovered. The continental Indias had been skirted.

Eighteen men had come back to tell the tale—eighteen out of the two hundred fifty who had set their hopes and their white sails westward; eighteen wraiths of men whose very wives did not recognize them; who hardly recognized themselves or each other, so much they had suffered, so far they had been. Eighteen men who for three years had followed the sunset around the world had returned to Spain—to San Lúcar—the very port from which they had set sail.

For the proverbial nine days the story told by the mapmaker in the courtyard of the tavern of Plasencia was mutton in the mouths of the Plasencianos.

The tavernkeeper and his groom, fired by the tales of ivory and diamonds to be had for the gathering, of spices that grew on bushes, and gold washed up by the

rivers, locked the door of tavern and stable and turning their backs on Plasencia set off on the dust-whitened road. They forgot the men who were lost, remembering only the eighteen who returned with their tales of discovery, and the cargo in the *Victoria's* hold so rich it more than paid for their three years' journey.

Some of the graybeards in Plasencia shrugged their expressive Spanish shoulders. "Why should I go out from Spain?" said one, who was *alcalde* of Plasencia. "I have a good home and family. The juice of the white grape is cooling to my thirst in the heat of noonday. In winter my *brasero* keeps me warm. Let others go following the sunset. I remain at home with my family."

Another, who was a salter of pork in Cáceres said: "Why should I go from Spain? My swine are fattening for the market."

And then, as if to try the strength of their Spanish souls and to test how much of the calcium of their soil had entered into the fiber of their being, greater tales than yet had been heard came fluttering across the sea.

Hernando Cortés of Medellín, who had conquered the land called Mexico, had brought thousands of infidels to Christ. He would be given thousands of hectares of land. Francisco Pizarro of Trujillo had learned from the natives of Darien that there were vast regions to the south peopled with hordes of infidels who worshiped the sun as god and lived in houses roofed with gold.

"Hernando Cortés!" exclaimed the *alcalde* of Plasencia when he heard the tale. "A conqueror—he? Don't tell me, man. I knew him as a student in Sala-

manca. And a very poor student he was, who never could learn civil law. What does he know of conquest?—he who was never even a soldier? What does he know of ruling a land? He who could not even learn the law."

The pork-salter from Cáceres heard the story. "Francisco Pizarro?" he asked. "He who was born a swineherd? Whose parents were not even married by the priest? Will he, too, be the possessor of lands? Will he be conqueror of a people who live in houses roofed with gold and who worship the sun as god?"

"That he will," the teller of the tale insisted. "Hernando Cortés of Medellín who knew nothing of arms has led an army of Spaniards increased by six thousand natives of Mexico who have acknowledged the true Church, and has conquered the land. And Francisco Pizarro, the swineherd, will no doubt be made a ruler by the king if he discovers the land of gold."

Then the *alcalde* and the pork-salter would knit their brows and after awhile one would say: "After all, why should I remain in Spain watching a few fat swine, when I might be gathering in gold and receiving a few thousand hectares of land?"

And the other would add: "Why should I sit at noonday drinking the white *agraz* when I could be gathering in golden goblets and becoming a *rico-hombre?*"

So, one by one, they departed. The pork-salter and the *alcalde,* a shepherd from the plains of León, a wheat-grower from Medina del Campo. Fed by the tales they heard, fired of their great imagination and deep in the spirit of the times, the man-power of Spain

surged outward with the tide of those who in first returning had brought the strange stories.

Tales of hardship did not daunt them. The perils of the sea they ignored. The hunger and thirst, the fevers, the barbarous Indians with their diabolical weapons and their poisoned darts, the reptiles with their deadly lances, the chilling winds of the mountains, the burning suns of the tropics—all these had no power to daunt them.

"The greater the danger," they said, "the greater will be the reward."

So the wheatfields of Medina del Campo waited for the hand of the reaper while the reaper was searching for gold. The sheep of León and Castile grazed idly on their highland pastures, their wool long and matted with brambles, because the shearer was gone on his crusade. The pigs of Extremadura fattened on the wild sweet acorns. The day of San Andrés passed, but the annual slaughter did not take place because the pork-salter was slaughtering heretics in a new land; so the pigs of Extremadura lived to a ripe old age and the souls of the infidel Indians went the sooner to God.

Old Luz wrung her hands in despair, and repeated what the father of Ines Suarez had said the morning his child was born: "There will not be one mule left in Extremadura. No, not one little mule."

Luz was right. Mules and horses were swept from the land and carried across the seas. They were more valuable, almost, than the men.

Tio Carlos, the godfather and uncle of Ines, though old and a cripple, who had held out longer than his

neighbors against the temptation of the hour, yielded at last, and furbishing up his helmet and the armor that had rusted in the garret since he had fought against the Moors, bound his sword to his belt and went to seek fortune and death. Why should he remain at home? There was not a laborer left to work his *hacienda.* Most of his horses had been sold. The rest had been stolen from his pastures.

Tia Catalina came to make her home with Ines in the fortress house with the iron-studded door. Old Luz remained to stir the *olla* in the iron pot or to bake the *pan dulce* of a morning. Pancho with his besom brushed the stone floors of the courtyard or crouched sleeping and dreaming in the sun.

"No more adventures for me," said old Pancho, when Ines asked him why he, too, did not go sailing out to the new world. "God will be calling for me very soon, and I want to be where he can find me."

Ines asked the same question of Agustin Padilla, a young and soulful-eyed lad who sometimes came at evening and stood beneath her casement singing romances to the accompaniment of his lute.

"No," Agustin would reply, "I am going to remain in Spain and marry you when you are grown."

And Ines, who was now past twelve years old and already wholly conscious of sex, would say with decision, "I shall marry no one but a soldier. Perhaps I shall be a soldier myself." And pointing to her resolute nose, she would add: "For I have the nose of El Cid, and he did not marry until he had won five battles."

Tia Catalina, who sat within earshot while these

nocturnal conversations went on between Ines in her iron-barred casement and Agustin below in the street, would shake her head and say:

"Agustin is a good boy, my child, and you will soon be of an age to marry. You could do nothing that would please me better than to become promised to him at once."

Ines' red lips would flash a smile and her white teeth would gleam like pearls. "Agustin Padilla?" she would say. "He does not stand firm on his legs, but wabbles like a new-born lamb. I shall win a few battles before I marry and I shall marry no one but a soldier. Padilla? I like not the name. It savors of the frying-pan and the kitchen!"

"Tut! Tut!" Tia Catalina would urge. "Battles are only for men. You must embroider your shawl and your *camisa* and say your beads like a good girl."

"But I do not like embroidering shawls and blouses. And I could say my beads just as well in battle as in the *sala*. Tell me, why is it that in Spain only men may go on adventure? Why is it that women are not soldiers and never go discovering new lands?"

"Because women must remain at home," said her aunt. "It is enough if now and then they discover a heretic and bring him to Christ."

"But think of all the heretics in the new world!" Ines would exclaim. "Why may I not go out there?"

"You must wait until you are grown up and married. Then if your lord and master sees fit to take you, you may go."

"Por Dios," Ines would answer. "There will be no more heretics left on earth by that time, for those who

have not found Christ by then will have been burned in the *auto-da-fé.*"

But as if to prove the fallacy of her statement, the heretics continued to be found and every day some new tale came in with the tide more thrilling than any that had come before.

Thus three years passed, but each day was a day of enchantment. Ines Suarez' world was arched with a sky of illusion and bounded by a horizon of gold.

Her soul reveled in these tales. Not only was Hernando Cortés from Medellín ruler of the land called Mexico. But—a sheep-herder from Cáceres ruled a domain of his own in Hispaniola, with a hundred Indians for slaves. The *alcalde* of Plasencia was governor of a broad tract in Tierra Firma. Don Pedro Arias of Avila was governor of Panama. Diego de Alvarado was *adelantado* of Mexico, and had lands almost as broad as those of Cortés.

Then came the greatest news of all. The natives of Darien had told the truth. There *was* a land to the south of Panama in the Mar del Sur that was peopled by hordes of infidels who worshiped the sun for god and lived in houses roofed with gold. Francisco Pizarro had discovered it! In company with Don Diego de Almagro of Malagón he had made the voyage of discovery. Pizarro and Almagro and a schoolmaster of Panama named Fernando de Luque had bound themselves together by oath in the name of God and the Holy Evangelists, to engage in the work of discovering and subduing the countries and provinces that they had found lying south of the Gulf of Panama, and were to divide equally among themselves the whole

of the conquered territory. Fernando de Luque had remained at Panama while the others went on the voyage of discovery. But de Luque's part in the enterprise was most important. He had secured the money for the others from the Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa of Panama.

The land of gold had been found! There were temples with walls made of gold and roofs that were edged with silver. The infidels ate from golden plates and drank from golden goblets. The very fruit in their gardens and the vegetables that grew in the soil were copied in gold and in silver.

Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro had discovered it, and had made oath to possess it in the name of the King. On March 10, 1526, this instrument had been signed. One fifth of the gold belonged to Carlos the Fifth of Spain.

Spain would be now the greatest nation on earth! It would be twenty times as powerful as Rome! The ruler of so great an empire must be more than mortal. He was now Lord of all the Earth. God had reserved for himself the heavens, but to Carlos the Fifth he had given the government of the world!

There were millions and millions of infidels who worshiped the sun and did not know the dear Christ. It was Spain that must show them the way. These infidels must acknowledge the true Church or must die. Their souls must go to God.

"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth to the King of Spain!"

Ines Suarez heard the tale, and whispering one morning to old Luz, she said:

"One of these days I shall go out with a ship. If

Tia Catalina tries to prevent me, then I shall go without her consent."

Old Luz shook her head, but in her heart she said:

"Inesita has the nose of the Cid. She has a will of her own. She will be strong and valiant. What she says she will do, she will do."

CHAPTER SIX

A SOLDIER RETURNED FROM THE WARS

IT WAS the summer of 1526, and Ines Suarez was a child no longer. Soft curves, so delicate of outline as to be unnoticed even by Luz's keen eyes, had rounded her breasts and curved her thighs and the calves of her slender, agile legs. A new fire—the fire of slumbering passion—shone in the dark pools of her eyes. The warmth of unconscious desire deepened the red of her lips.

Luz, coming into her bedroom one August morning, bringing the breakfast egg and *pan dulce,* was startled by the vehemence of the embrace with which she was greeted by Ines.

"Luz, mia," exclaimed Ines, flinging her arms around the old woman, "last night as I stood by my window I saw a knight riding by. He rode on a horse so fleet that in the wind he seemed a great bird flying. He was dressed all in armor and his breastplate, his casque, and his greave were brighter than the sun at noonday. He wore a bonnet of plumes, and so swiftly did he flash by that his plumes made a rainbow in the sky!"

"Maria Santissima!" exclaimed old Luz. "You have been hearing too many romances."

"Not one too many. Not one!" exclaimed Ines, breathlessly, her eyes glowing with new light. "He rode

beneath my window and though I could not see his eyes——"

"Santa Purissima!" exclaimed old Luz, scrutinizing Ines with her keen eyes, while her old hands, roving investigatingly over the body of her charge, felt the rounded breasts. *"Santa María,* you are a child no longer, but a señorita grown."

So, without more ado than waiting while Ines finished her light breakfast, Luz seated her on a low stool and standing behind her combed out the masses of chestnut hair from their thick braids and arranged them like a little fortress above the delicate Spanish head, turning Ines this way and that as she did so.

With white of egg she glazed the golden pallor of Ines' cheeks, for water was not used on Christian bodies since the departure of the dogs of Moors with their lavings and bathings to cleanse their infidel filth. No decent person in Spain, in that day, would have touched water to his body or his face.

"Today is the feast day of Our Lady," said Luz. "Today you go to mass and after mass to the procession of the Virgin."

"And after that to the *paseo,"* said Ines, leaping to her feet. "Who knows but I may see my knight with the rainbow plumes? So today I shall wear my white gown with the flowered shawl!"

"For certain," agreed old Luz. "You are of *hidalgo* birth. You must dress as the noblewomen dress."

From the leather chest old Luz brought forth the dress of white silk with the full flowing skirt and the embroidered shawl on which her own fingers, as well as the fingers of Ines herself and the fat fingers of Doña Catalina, had labored for many a day.

Its full skirts fell to the floor and swished and whispered as Ines pirouetted. The slender waist was laced yet more slender into the tight basque that was heavily embroidered with vines and flowers of gold and silver thread. The long sleeves hung to her finger tips and formed of a series of heavy puffs, with a capelike oversleeve that depended from the tops, and from her slender shoulders was draped a shawl that was more colorful than a garden of flowers.

Luz beamed with maternal eyes on the child who had grown a woman under her charge. The effect was all she could have desired, all that anyone could have desired in the Spain of 1526.

It was the robust style of dress favored by the Flemish ladies of the court of the German monarch who ruled in Valladolid. It was the style copied by the daughters of nobility in Spain. It was the style the daughters of *hidalgos* wore in Plasencia. It was the style Ines must wear, though the eyes of old Luz grow dim with fine embroidering and the fingers of old Luz grow thin from a diet of crusts that silk and tinsel might be bought.

Ines Suarez was the daughter of an *hidalgo* and though Don Fulano's rents had ceased to come in and the dower of Doña Catalina grew smaller each year with no laborers to work the *hacienda,* she must dress as the others dressed, must live up to the standards set.

Indeed, there was often a question in the mind of old Luz whether the income that came into the house of the Suarez was not the bounty of God, so frightful was the depopulation in Spain, so insignificant its manpower, so scanty the returns from the land.

Yet here was Ines grown up, dressed in a full flowing

silk, ready for the mass and the procession of the Virgin, and babbling of knights on winged steeds, wearing their bonnets of plumes.

"You must go to the *paseo* after mass," said Doña Catalina when Ines went to her room for inspection. "Perhaps you will see Agustin. For youth comes but once and the heart soon grows old," added the aunt with a sigh. Tia Catalina was too fat and heavy now to leave the chair in her room except on special occasions, but she surveyed the young person before her with admiring eyes.

Luz drew her *rebozo* over her head and trotted a few paces behind her charge, following her to the cathedral, her own heart beating to the lilt of the white silk skirt swaying ahead of her as Ines glided over the cobbled stones.

There was something more compelling about Ines Suarez that day than the cut of her basque or her skirt, than the headdress that stood out in great chestnut puffs from her head, with a lacy mantilla pinned over them and a cluster of white carnations nestling in the gold curve of her neck.

She was the embodiment of a resistless power that is known to mankind as Destiny. It glowed on her young cheek. It lurked in the dawning passion of her eyes. It showed itself in a new determination in the aquiline line of her nose, in the fullness of her red lips, in the sex-consciousness of her whole manner.

Old Luz walked behind her, but Destiny danced gayly before as Ines tripped along over the old stones of Plasencia, humming the romance that was the favorite with dawning womanhood in Spain of that day.

It was the romance of how Don Rodrigo presented himself to the King.

Entre ellos iba Rodrigo,
el soberbio castellano;
todos caminan á mula
sólo Rodrigo á caballo;
todos visten oro y seda;
Rodrigo va bien armado;
Todos espadas ceñidas,
Rodrigo estoque dorado;
todos con sendas varicas,
Rodrigo lanza en la mano;
todos guantes olorosos,
Rodrigo guante mallado;
todos sombreros muy ricos;
Rodrigo casco acerado,
y encima del casco lleva
un bonete colorado.

"Among them rode Rodrigo, the superb Castilian," she hummed in her heart. It was the romance of a brave soldier who feared not even a King, who among the three hundred elegantly dressed sons of *hidalgos* wore the garb of a soldier and played a soldier's part. It was the romance of the day in that day of romance when few could read and memory took the place of many books. "The others wore perfumed gloves," she sang, "but Rodrigo wore gauntlet of mail. The others wore rich sombreros; Rodrigo wore casque of steel, and above his casque he wore a bonnet of colored plumes."

The humming stopped abruptly. Ines had reached the cathedral door. Entering, she went forward and dropped to her knees on the hard stone floor. She drew her rosary through her fingers, moved by the appeal of sandalwood beads slipping through her

devout fingers, by the shafts of color slanting downward from painted glass windows, by the smell of incense drifting through transept and nave, by the low boom of priests chanting in distant chapels.

Her senses were alive to the touch of her beads slipping through youth's warm fingers. She listened to the chant of the priest and to the responses of the choir but her downcast eyes traced the gold thread pattern on her basque and she was conscious of the new-born curve of her breasts.

She bowed her head in devotion, but the fragrance of the spiced carnations resting in the gold curve of her neck was stronger than the burning incense on the altar.

When the mass was at last ended Ines continued to pray.

"Ten more Aves and ten more Pater Nosters," she told herself, "because my thoughts have been on worldly things during mass."

"Hail, Mary, full of grace . . ." Ten times she repeated the Ave.

"*Nuestro padre* . . ." Over and over, ten times she said her Pater Noster.

Finally, her self-inflicted penance accomplished, she rose to her feet, signaling to old Luz that she was ready to depart and, genuflecting once more, she turned and walked down the aisle. A few feet before she reached the door, the heart in her body stood still.

For there, silhouetted in the cathedral doorway, his form outlined in the morning sun, stood her knight in full armor, his plumed casque held in his hand, his broadsword at his belt.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners

now and in the hour of our death, Amen!" Ines clutched the rosary in her hand and instinctively she repeated her prayer. It was he whom she had seen the night before as she looked out at the stars. He who had ridden a horse so fleet that in the wind he seemed a great bird flying. He whose bonnet of plumes had made a rainbow in the sky, so swiftly did it flash by.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God!" she repeated. She must pass him at the cathedral door. His bonnet in his hand was no rainbow in the morning sunlight, but white plumes scorched by the sun. His armor showed scars of battle.

"María Santissima!" whispered old Luz behind her. She, too, had seen. She stiffened her aged shoulders as one might who scents danger, and marched breast forward down the aisle following a few paces behind Ines.

At the cathedral door Ines had to pass so close that the folds of her swaying skirt brushed against the *borceguies* of the soldier.

No knight of dreams was he who stood waiting, with an elderly comrade beside him, for the early devotees to pass from the church that they might enter and make their devotions. A veteran of the Italian wars, rather, returning victoriously from Pavia, en route from Barcelona and Madrid to his farm in Castuera de la Serena. His companion was his senior by many years, and both were stopping along their homeward route saying the stations of the cross and attending mass in the cathedrals in gratitude to Santiago for victory in battle and for safe return to their native land.

A spare, lean soldier of twenty-five was the knight of dreams, with the gleam of the victor in his eye, with

the bearing of the conqueror in his manner. A trifle above medium height, with deep chest and shoulders broad and well-proportioned. His coal-black hair waving back from forehead and temples was short, as befitted a Spanish soldier. His skin was tanned with the suns of Italy. His large brown eyes were grave, but had that wide opening at the temples that gave them an expression amorously devouring.

Ines stared at him as she passed like one who sees an apparition. He smiled and his eyes roved after her. Then turning his head to his companion, he passed a remark that Ines could not but hear.

It was about her beautiful eyes—*ojos ajenjos*—absinthe eyes.

The older man smiled and nodded, but his smile was weary and his nod was brief. He had seen eyes before, and the women who possessed them, and his heart was as weary of women as his soul was weary of war.

Ines Suarez' heart pounded in her breast. Her feet scarcely touched the pavement. It was the first compliment she had ever received as a woman receives compliments from men. She tried hard not to turn her head, but in spite of her it turned just enough to see that the soldier was turning too.

Then, from the cathedral door, came the procession of the Virgin, borne on the shoulders of the white-robed priests. The queen of Heaven, robed in jewels and lace more costly than the robes of any queen of earth, the sorrowful mother of the child who was born in a manger, was garish in lace and in silk, in jewels and trinkets.

As the procession passed, the worshipers prostrated themselves to the pavement. Among them Ines knelt,

her white skirts brushing the pavement, while the two soldiers—the one with the manner of a conqueror, the other with the air of being weary of women—knelt on the old stone roadway.

A moment they knelt while the Virgin passed, then Ines rose and followed off after the procession while the soldiers disappeared within the cathedral, but not before the grave eyes of the younger had cast one more amorous glance after Ines. It is difficult sometimes to say where the love of woman ends and the love of God begins, in the surging breast of man.

Ines quickly joined a group of girls of her own age and trooped along following the procession, and when the procession returned to the church, Ines went with the others to the *paseo,* while old Luz joined the servants of Plasencia.

Ines remained abroad all day, strolling around and around with her feminine companions in that endless human skein that is known in Spain as the *paseo,* while the circle of youths of the village unwound itself in the opposite direction. Agustin Padilla was there, but Ines gave him scarcely a glance. She was looking for a soldier with firm lithe legs and eyes that opened wide at the temples.

She feasted on *fritos* purchased from venders and on those sticky sweet comfitures wrapped in tinsel which remained in Spain long long after the Moors who introduced them had been banished.

It was dusk when Ines returned to her house on the *plazuela,* the house with the fortress-like door and the arms of the Suarez wrought in constellations of studded nails.

Her heart was too jumpy for sleep, so she stood by

the iron-barred window of her *sala* in the second story of the house and watched the polished stars come out one by one above the Carpetanos.

Old Luz pattered about the house preparing for the night. Now and then she would pause in the doorway babbling about the beautiful *fiesta* and the dear Virgin. Ines answered as one in a dream, gazing from the window. For the memory of the soldier persisted and she could not efface the picture of his silhouette in the doorway of the old cathedral, plumed casque in hand, armor showing scars of battle, grave eyes, firm, lithe limbs.

Gazing from the window she hummed the romances of Spain, the romances with which the fabric of Spain was interwoven. One of these romances spun like a spider's web through her imaginative brain.

It was the romance of Rosaflorida that Ines now was singing. Rosaflorida dwelt in a castle. The castle had foundations of gold and battlements of silver and between the merlons was a sapphire that glowed brighter at night than the sun by day. Rosaflorida was sought by gallants far and wide. Seven counts desired her. Three dukes of Lombardy sought her hand. But she disdained them all and sent a message to Montesinos, whom she never yet had seen but of whom she had heard many tales. In the message Rosaflorida ordered her knight to come to her in the flowery season of Easter. "Tell him," said Rosaflorida, "that my body is the most beautiful in all Castile. That it is his for the asking. And tell him if he desires more than this, I will give him seven castles, the best castles there are in Spain."

Ines Suarez hummed the romance of Rosaflorida

as she stood at her casement window looking out into the peace of a Spanish night.

Y si de mi mas quisiere
Yo mucho más le daría.
Darle he siete castillos
Los mejores que hay en Castilla.

She wished that she knew how to write. Then she too might send a letter to her knight, commanding him to come to her, not in the flowery season of Easter but in the evening of the day of the Feast of Our Lady.

For more than an hour Ines stood by the window, while old Luz, her evening tasks accomplished, drowsed on a mat near the door, like a sentry sleeping on duty.

The moon rose and hung over the mountains. The breath of thyme blew across the fields. A nightingale sang in the wild olives.

What was that shadow moving in the street below? It was a shadow with soldierly bearing, with broad shoulders, well proportioned, with firm lithe limbs, not at all like the wabbly legs of Agustin Padilla. And in the moonlight she saw that the shadow removed its casque and wiped its brow, for the night was warm, and she saw that the locks were short, as befitted a soldier.

Her balcony was high. Even had she stretched her arm to its full length she could not have touched the raven locks of the soldier beneath her window. Moreover such an act would have been unmaidenly. She doubted if Rosaflorida would have been so bold. What would Rosaflorida have done?

"Y si de mi mas quisiere . . ." she hummed, and, plucking one spicy blossom from the cluster of white carnations at her neck, she stretched her hand through the bars and let the flower drop. It fell at the feet of the soldier.

The shadow stopped abruptly. The eyes looked up. In the moonlight they were grave, serious. He saw the girl in the balcony above him. It was she who was in silhouette now, against the light of flickering oil wicks at her back.

Her lips flashed a smile. In the moonlight her teeth gleamed.

"Lindissima!" said the shadow. "It is the child of the absinthe eyes."

"I am no child," she whispered, "but a señorita grown." She poised on tiptoe at full height, one shoulder uplifted, one hand on hip, her chin tilted tantalizingly upward showing the exquisite curve of her neck. Her rounded breasts were outlined beneath the flowered basque.

"My name is Ines Suarez," she said with the frankness of a child. Even had old Luz been awake, there was no need for secrecy. Balcony conversations were frequent and accepted in Spain. What harm, so long as the woman remained in the balcony, the man in the street below, the iron bars between. "How do you call yourself?" she asked.

"Pedro de Valdivia of Castuera de la Serena," he told her, "a soldier of my King, returned from the wars in Italy for a brief respite—and your servant, beautiful señorita." He bowed low and swept the ground with the plumes of the casque in his hand.

"Ai! A soldier!" she exulted, and quickly asked: "Can you slay twenty Moors at a stroke? Do you bring back the heads of your victims as souvenirs?"

"I do more, far more," he answered. "I slay hundreds with my *arcabuz*. I have brought back a King entire as souvenir to his Royal Majesty, Carlos the Fifth, King of Spain."

Ines pressed against the balcony, her elbows resting on the railing, her chin cupped in her hands.

"And how is that?" she asked. "Tell me. Tell me. For I love to hear of battles. And how is it that you, a soldier, happen to be stopping in Plasencia?"

"I come from Pavia in Italy," he told her, "by way of Madrid, where the King is at present holding Court. I have knelt at the feet of my King. I have brought him the thanks of the Pope, the gratitude of the Emperor of Italy, but I have brought him far more than that, for his enemy, Francis the First, he who was King of France, is now a prisoner in Madrid, captured at the battle of Pavia."

"Oh, tell me about it," she pleaded, "for I know nothing of war. I know nothing but Plasencia and that today is the Feast of Our Lady."

"What more do you need to know, with those eyes, those lips, that hair?" he said.

"I want to know everything!" she exclaimed. "Everything in the world! Tell me of war and of battles and of the capture of Francis, King of France."

So, standing beneath her balcony Pedro de Valdivia of Castuera told of the battles he had fought. He told her of the siege of Milan; of the attack on the walled park of Mirabello. He told her of the delay caused by the solid walls and of day breaking before the actual

encounter. He told her of the army of the French; how Francis the First had mustered his army, which consisted of eight thousand Swiss, five thousand Germans, seven thousand French infantry, and six thousand Italians.

He told her of the direct attack upon the French army and of the frightful mêlée which ensued, and of the victory of the Imperial Army, due to the admirable fire-discipline and military tactics of the Spanish arquebusiers, of which he, who bowed low before her, was one. He told her of the capture of Francis, the King, and of bringing him prisoner to Madrid.

It was all a confused jumble of military tactics and military words to her, but it had a ring of battle and she knew that a war had been won and that an enemy king had been captured.

"The Swiss pikemen went down like flies before the rain of our bullets," he said. "The French infantry and the German squadrons could not withstand our attack. The arquebus defeated the pike. The day of hand firearms has come. The pike is a weapon no longer."

"How many did you kill?" she asked, grown bloodthirsty with the tale of war.

"More than I cared to count," he told her, "but I served the King, my Cæsar, and God was at my side."

"Santiago be praised!" she exclaimed with such fervor as to cause old Luz to stir in her sleep.

"Yes, Santiago be praised!" he repeated. "Now I go for awhile to my farm at Castuera until my King shall call me to serve."

"Perhaps . . ." Ines hesitated, "perhaps there is someone in Castuera—someone whom you love and

will marry?" She was thinking of Rosaflorida and her castle with foundations of gold.

"My love is my *arcabuz,*" he told her. "But I have a farm at Castuera and a good soldier must know something of the farm or many a time he will go hungry. But I hear that much is happening in the world across the waters, so I pray my King may call me soon, because farming is dull life for a soldier and the drone of the *arriero* singing his Arab song is not music to the ears tuned to the shouts of battle; nor is the creak of the sledge threshing out grain to be compared to the crack of the bullet."

"You will go to the new world," she said. "Everyone is going. Some day I shall go out with a ship. Battles are being fought there every day. Heretics are being brought to Christ. There are lands that are paved with gold, and pearls are being hauled up in nets by the fishermen."

"So I hear. So I hear," he replied. "It matters not where I fight my battles, so long as I serve my King."

"But a shepherd of Castile is lord of an island in the Caribbees. A pork-salter from Cáceres has a hundred Indians for slaves. The *alcalde* of Plasencia is governor of a tract in Tierra Firma. Hernando Cortés of Medellín, who knew nothing of arms, is Captain-General of Mexico. Francisco Pizarro of Trujillo has discovered a country in the Mar del Sur, where infidels worship the sun for god and live in palaces roofed with gold."

"Francisco Pizarro!" Pedro de Valdivia pondered a moment. "I go to my farm at Castuera," he repeated. "When my King needs me again he will find me at my plow."

"Some day I shall go out with a ship!" Ines Suarez repeated. "Perhaps I too shall fight battles for Christ and the King. See, I have the nose of the Cid. They have said I shall be strong and valiant." She pressed her face between the bars of the window. Even in the moonlight Pedro de Valdivia could read an invitation and a promise in her eyes.

"I cannot see your nose for the light of your eyes," he told her. "Your battles will be battles of the heart."

She continued to press her face against the bars. Her arms reached out through the window, her fingers curled luxuriously, as a cat stretches his paws.

The soldier in the roadway below was hungry for the touch of woman. He had scaled too many ramparts to be daunted by walls. He had felt the lips of too many women to be baffled by iron bars. Quickly he mounted to the balcony, flung his armored leg across the balustrade, and thrusting his arms through the bars he encircled the willing body of Ines, the child who was grown a woman. In the moonlight their lips met and clung together with the fierce passion of the soldier hungry for woman, of the woman ready for love. Her arms slipped around his steel-clad shoulders, crept upward and felt the warmth of his neck, caressed it and his short-cropped locks.

"Flamencita!" (Little Soldier-Gipsy!) he whispered.

"Little gipsy with the absinthe eyes!" he said, and kissed her eyes, her hair, her mouth again and again, with the devouring passion of the woman-hungry soldier.

The sound of a heavy step came from the passageway beyond the *sala*. It was the step of Doña Catalina. Old Luz, hearing it, stirred and rubbed her eyes.

"Que paso?" (What is happening?) she mumbled, as she heard the step near the door.

The lips at the window parted. The arms reluctantly untwined.

"Go, *mio!*" urged Ines. "Go! Go quickly!"

For a moment the soldier stood his ground, awaiting what might ensue, unwilling to retreat in the face of danger. But Ines pushed him gently from the sill.

"Go, *por Dios!*" she pleaded. "My aunt comes. Go you with God."

Reluctantly he flung his leg across the balustrade and dropped heavily to the ground, his armor clanking. There he replaced his helmet which he had left below, and turning on his heel, departed.

Ines waved him *adios* with the inturning, come-hither motion of the fingers that in Spain signifies more than farewell, being rather an invitation to return.

Yet she had said: "Go, *por Dios*" and by the will of God they parted, the soldier returned from the wars and the child who was a child no longer but a señorita grown.

She watched him disappear down the cobbled road, the old walls echoing to his tread, his armor clanking, his plumes tossing gayly overhead. At the end of the road he turned and waved *adios* with his sword.

Doña Catalina, standing in the doorway, asked: "Was it Agustin whom I heard?"

Ines answered the truth. "It was not Agustin. It was a soldier passing down the street."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONQUERING HEROES COME

THE peace of noonday lay upon the city of Plasencia (thanks be to God and to man). The scorching sun of summer blazed down upon the city walls and upon the Gothic spires of the old cathedral. It whitened the arched stone bridges that spanned the River Jerte. Along the Alameda the benches were empty. No dip of oars came from the river, no clink of goblets from the tavern. The whitewashed houses might have been so many tombs for all the life they offered. Plasencia was sleeping. It was the hour of *siesta.*

In the darkened chamber of her fortress house Ines Suarez lay upon her couch. One thick braid of her chestnut hair trailed over the edge, barely escaping the floor. Her long lashes brushed the pale gold of her cheeks. Her bosom rose and fell with the rhythm of her breathing. It was a woman's bosom now, for the year was 1529, and the curves of shoulder and breast as she lay on the couch were the curves of womanhood.

On a mat near the door old Luz drowsed in blissful slumber. In her chair in an adjoining room, Doña Catalina, too corpulent now to endure much change, slept with fat chin on fat chest. In a shaded corner of the courtyard old Pancho dreamed and smiled.

For more than an hour the *siesta* continued, the

silence prevailed. Then, gently as the coming of dawn a puff of dust floated upward from the road that led from Toledo. The faint tinkle of a mule bell echoed from the postern gate. Had anyone been awake in Plasencia he might have seen, by straining his eyes, a traveler on muleback dressed in the brown garb of a monk. But no one saw, because Plasencia was sleeping. So the mulebell tinkled nearer and nearer and the traveler in the brown garb pushed his cowl back on his forehead and wiped the sweat from his brow. His garb and his mule were powdered with lime dust. It was plain he had come a long journey. But no one was awake to meet him as he entered the city of Plasencia.

A few more moments of silence and the noonday peace became a jangling riot. The bell towers of Plasencia pealed with wild clangor. Old bells whose throats had lost all music shook the air with their ringing. Middle-aged bells of deep-toned melody swelled out upon the air. Young bells, wild young bells with high falsetto voices, danced with the joy of youth and rang peal on merry peal.

Ines sprang from her couch, wide awake, alert, eager. She heard iron bars dropping in their sockets and fortress doors opening. She heard voices sounding in the narrow streets. Dogs barked. Children wailed. Tumult was in the air.

Ines darted to the window and looked down into the cobbled road beneath. Old Luz sat up and rubbed her eyes. Doña Catalina called from the adjacent room.

"Que paso? Que paso?" (What happens? What happens?) That was the question on every hand.

Swiftly as a cat and with no more sound, Ines glided

down the stone steps and hurried through the courtyard, where old Pancho was wringing his hands in bewilderment, and out into the street, followed by old Luz.

The streets, the *plazuela,* the doorways, the balconies, were alive with a curious throng. You would not have thought to find so many people in all Extremadura. Here an old man hobbled on his cane, his long white locks glistening in the sun; there a woman suckling her babe darted into the thick of the crowd. Children clung to their mothers' hands, crying as they ran. All steps led to the cathedral, from whence the first ringing had come.

"God protect us! Heaven forgive us our sins!" prayed Ines as she ran with the others. "What has happened?" she asked. "What has happened?" All asked the same question, but none could give the answer until they reached the cathedral door.

"Miracles have happened! Miracles!" It was the voice of the good bishop; a voice vibrant with emotion. "A traveler from Toledo has come bringing tidings of great joy. Two heroes have returned to Spain from the world across the waters. Two conquerors have come home—and both of them Extremeños. Hernando Cortés of Medellín has come back from the land called Mexico—New Spain is its name henceforth. Francisco Pizarro of Trujillo has returned from yet another country called Peru. New Castile it is now baptized—a land that is paved with gold, with forests of golden trees and palaces filled with precious stones. A shipload of gold he has brought to prove that the tale is true. The *aduana* at Palos is filled with golden ingots. Coffers of precious stones have been carried to the King

at Toledo. The King has made Cortés a Marquis and Pizarro a *gobernador.*"

"Tst! Tst!" The white-haired old man leaning on his cane clucked his tongue. He who had once been a clever lawyer before he was stricken with palsy. "Hernando Cortés of Medellín? I knew him well at Salamanca. The poorest student in the class. The King has made him a Marquis!"

"Francisco Pizarro!" said another—it was the woman with the babe at her breast. "He who began life as a swineherd? Whose parents were not even married by the priest? He has discovered a land of gold! He has been made a *gobernador!* He will have slaves at his command. The poor have come into their own!"

The bishop continued the tale—a long tale told with many elaborations after the manner of the Spanish. "Yes, the two heroes have returned to Spain and met at the convent of La Rabida. Now they are both at Toledo, where the King is holding Court. Almost at the same moment they arrived in Spain, as if led by the finger of God." The bishop described the meeting of the heroes at Court, and of how the gracious King, Carlos the Fifth, had delayed his departure for Italy—where he was to receive reward for glory of his own—in order that he might greet the two *conquistadores.* And now King Carlos was to go to Italy to receive the Imperial Crown from the hands of the Pope because of his triumphs in the Italian wars; and the two *conquistadores* were to go to Guadalupe, making a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin for blessings received already and for a continuation of the blessings in the future. Of course they must both go back once more to the new world. They must continue to con-

quer; all Spain must continue to conquer until the whole earth should belong to their King and every infidel be brought to Christ. Tomorrow the two *conquistadores* would journey to the shrine of Guadalupe, escorted by the soldiers of the King, some of them heroes themselves, they who had triumphed at Pavia in Italy.

"Pavia!" Ines Suarez started at the word. Pavia! It was there Pedro de Valdivia had fought; there the arquebusiers of Spain had first triumphed over the Swiss pikemen; there they had taken Francis the First prisoner. There her hero had served Christ and the King of Spain. She could see him now as she saw him that night in the moonlight, for his image was engraved on her heart, waving *adios* with his sword, his footsteps resounding in the narrow street, the old walls echoing to the clank of his armor, his white plumes tossing above his head. Thus her thoughts ran on until the Bishop of Plasencia brought her back with his oratory.

"Hernando Cortés of Medellín, who has conquered a land called Mexico, and who has brought thousands of infidels to Christ, has brought back some of the conquered chieftains. He took them to Toledo to show to his King. Francisco Pizarro of Trujillo brought back a number of strange animals that look like camels, yet smaller than camels and with no hump. Beasts of burden, though, like the camels, and with long woolly hair on their flanks."

The bishop paused and leaned toward the brown-garbed monk who had brought the news. Then once more he addressed his audience before the cathedral door.

"If anyone doubts the tale," the bishop told them,

"let him journey ten leagues to Navalmoral. There he can judge for himself. There the road from Toledo turns southward to Guadalupe. There the cavalcade will come and any doubter can see whether the tale be true; whether a miracle happened and two heroes have returned to Spain, arriving at the very same moment, as if led by the finger of God, one from the land called Mexico, the other from the land called Peru. The cavalcade will reach the turn of the road before the clock has gone two times around."

The bishop, having ceased speaking, turned and entered the cathedral. The populace poured in after him, weeping for joy, beating their breasts, mortifying their flesh, while the mass of thanksgiving was said. The palsied old man on his cane, the woman suckling her babe, old Luz beating the flat of her hand against her forehead in a delirium of joy—all joined in the mass of thanksgiving to Christ and Santiago.

Ines Suarez told her beads, murmuring prayers of devotion, but the name of Pedro de Valdivia was interwoven with the names of the heroes of Spain.

It was not until mass was ended and Ines was returning to her home, that the full force of the bishop's suggestion took root and blossomed in her brain.

"'If anyone doubts the tale,'" the bishop had said, "'let him journey ten leagues to Navalmoral. There he can judge for himself.'"

Ines Suarez did not doubt. Yet that night she did not close her eyes, but tossed on a restless bed. There were strange countries across the seas, and lands that were paved with gold, and infidels who did not know the dear Christ but worshiped the sun as god, while she remained idle in Plasencia. There were galleons

(From an old print)

DON FRANCISCO PIZARRO

Son of a swineherd, and discoverer of a land of gold.

sailing the seas and soldiers winning wars in far countries—and she at home in a fortress house looking out at the world through iron bars. There were *conquistadores* returning triumphant, arriving in Spain from different parts of the earth almost at the very same moment, as if led by the finger of God, and she lying in a curtained bed! There was a cavalcade on its road from the King, journeying this moment to Navalmoral, and that but ten leagues away—while she lay courting sleep! There was an escort of soldiers! . . .

Ines Suarez' thoughts got no farther. She rose from her bed while all the cats were gray—as they would say in Plasencia—and stepping softly about her room she dressed, tiptoeing past old Luz who slept heavily at the doorway and, gliding like her own shadow down the stairs lest she waken Doña Catalina—she hurried out into the courtyard, where Fuegito, her horse, was stabled.

Old Pancho's ears were sharp. He stumbled to his feet at the sound of his mistress's steps and at her given order saddled and bridled her horse. He would have assisted Ines to mount, but she leaped lightly into the saddle, pressing her finger to her lips, commanding the old man to silence. Pancho obeyed sleepily, blindly, and whispering "Go you with God!" cautiously unbarred the door.

Out into the cobbled road went Ines; Fuegito, with instinct almost human, lifting his feet from the pavement so that his hoofs scarcely made a sound on the stones.

Across the *plazuela* and the Plaza Mayor and along the Alameda they rode, Fuegito with his ears pricked backward in wonderment at this untimely excursion.

Over the arched stone bridge, gray in the soft light of dawn, and out along the road that wound like a dusty snake to Malpartida, Ines urged her horse impatiently forward.

Soon the sky was streaked with rose and daylight kissed the tops of the Carpetanos. In the light of day she saw the forms of other riders. Ines rode without companion, but she was not alone on her journey. Other citizens of Plasencia, stirred by the bishop's tale, or led by their own curiosity, had set off on the road to Navalmoral. Some were ahead of her by several hours, their dust still heavy along the road. Some awaiting the dawn were only a few paces behind. Some with far fleeter horses than old Fuegito passed her as she urged her steed forward. Yet it was little urging Fuegito required. Although he was old, he had the Andalusian fire in his veins, and after he was started on the road he kept his ears pricked forward as if to set a good example for his hoofs.

Most of the travelers along the road were old, but occasionally one was young with the spirit of adventure just born. Some were feeble and infirm, with curiosity stronger than their bodies. Some who had delayed their adventure too long were speeding to make up for lost time. Occasionally one was a woman accompanied by husband and father. These glanced inquiringly at Ines, a woman, alone on a road in Spain, where the influence of the Moor, who immured his women behind bars, remained.

Little Ines Suarez cared for custom or for the opinion of those she met along the road. Wholly indifferent to their judgment, though wholly conscious of

their glances, she rode along the road with head flung high, commanding respect while creating consternation.

Sometimes two *caballeros* passing would bow from their waists in dignified greeting, sweeping the air with their large sombreros and then, having passed beyond her hearing, would draw their heads and their steeds together, and whisper one to the other like old women gossiping beside a fountain. Strange that such a beautiful señorita should travel alone in Spain! In Spain, where such things were not done unless . . . ? Had she no father? No mother? Was she—surely not—one of those of doubtful calling? Sometimes their heads would turn slightly, but always there was another *caballero* coming along the road.

Occasionally that other *caballero* would check his horse as he passed her, casting libidinous glances, then seeing her look of contempt would doff his sombrero and murmur: *"Adios,* señorita, go you with God!"

"Adios!" Ines Suarez would reply as the *caballero* disappeared in a cloud of dust.

For it was little thought she gave to those she met upon the journey. Though her eye was bold, her brow was passive. Though she rode on a sidesaddle, she handled her horse like a warrior. It was of Navalmoral she thought; Navalmoral, which was her objective.

Yet as she rode she could not but wonder about that far country whose streets were paved with gold; where diamonds grew on trees and pearls as large as the eggs of Extremadura's hens were hauled in by the fishermen in their nets. She could not but wonder about the infidels whose God was the sun and who knew not the dear Christ or his saints. She could not but wonder about the strange animals that grew in the strange

country and of which the bishop had spoken; animals that looked like camels yet were smaller than camels but better beasts of burden and with more fur on their flanks than sheep.

She wondered, too, what the heroes would be like and what manner of man was required to become a *conquistador.*

Thus musing, she kept Fuegito to his mettle and proceeded along the road. It was a wild and picturesque country through which Ines Suarez made her journey, now passing through groves of olive and ilex, now hugging the sides of granite mountains with castles perched high overhead, now over stone bridges, across the Tiétar, with the sea-green river winding far below; now through thick forests of oak and out now upon the sun-bleached open road.

The sun rose higher and higher and sucked the moisture from the morning air. She rested Fuegito at noonday and dined upon a bit of cheese and some figs and *pan dulce* which she had secreted in her embroidered *alforja* as she passed through kitchen to courtyard in the gray light of the morning.

The sun dropped behind her and threw long shadows ahead of her on the road. She spurred Fuegito forward, hoping to do the ten leagues to Navalmoral before dusk should fall. But a stone in his hoof lamed Fuegito, and darkness came upon her while she still had four more leagues to go. However, a *posada* with a clean bed offered shelter for the night and she slept the sleep of the innocent, regardless of the questioning glances cast upon her by the innkeeper and his wife, or of their murmured comments after she retired for the night.

She was up with the first light of dawn, determined to reach the junction of the road before the *conquistadores* reached Navalmoral on their way to Guadalupe. However, Fuegito's speed was not equal to the traditional Spanish league an hour and the whole world was ahead of her when she neared the appointed goal.

Never in the memory of Ines Suarez, never in the memory of Spain, never since the return of Cristóbal Colón from his discoveries in the new world, had the roads presented such a spectacle as unfolded before Ines' eyes as she neared the city of Navalmoral!

The tale of the return of the conquerors had spread to every corner of Spain. The wayfarers along the road were numerous. Long before she reached the junction of the road from which the conquerors should come, Ines' heart beat wildly. She strained her eyes hoping to pierce the clouds of dust that rose before her. She spurred Fuegito to his utmost endeavor, and at last reached the gateway that gave entrance to the city.

Inside the gate she paused for breath, for there the dust rose thickest, stirred by milling humanity—on foot, on horse and muleback, in coach and cart and carriage drawn up in tremulous excitement. Balconies and doorways were filled. Even the flat roofs of the houses were black with spectators. Bells were ringing, flags and banners were waving, fans were fluttering in the hands of the señoras and the señoritas waiting in coach or carriage, leaning perilously from roof, or watching from crowded balcony or door.

Ines found an opening in the crowd of mounted spectators, and wedging Fuegito in amongst them, waited with the rest. Her throat was dry and parched

with dust. Dust lay thick upon the folds of her skirt and powdered the long cape that fell almost to the dusty road. Fuegito's flanks were coated with dust and moist with sweat.

But Ines cared neither for dust nor for heat. Her wide, wondering eyes were fixed in eager scrutiny, gazing far down the road. The little glints of green danced in the dark pools of her eyes. Her red lips were parted. Her white teeth gleamed. Her bosom rose and fell with the short breathing of emotion. Little tendrils of her chestnut hair stole from her towered coiffure and curled moistily on her brow.

A few moments she waited and then the sound of trumpet and drum and the merry note of the flageolet broke upon the air.

"Cristo y Santiago!" The murmur rang through the throng. "The conquerors come!"

"Look!" exclaimed a voice from the rooftops. "Hernando Cortés approaches."

And even as the voice was speaking, the cavalcade appeared around a bend in the road. It was led by the conqueror of Mexico.

The huzzahs of the onlookers rang through the air. *"Viva* Cortés!" they called. *"Viva* Cortés and Spain!" The cheering came from the balconies and from the coaches of the rich drawn up around the gates of the city.

Mounted on a fiery horse, the hero of Mexico drew near. His hair and beard, coal black, accentuated the pallor of his skin. His hair grew long over his temples and ears and was clipped in page-boy fashion. His brow was furrowed and his lower lip seamed with a

scar. He bowed in acknowledgment of the greeting, and a faint smile lighted his serious face.

A captain rode on either side of him, companions of his conquests. And following him on foot were a squad of twenty captives bound together with chains. Their bearing was noble, in spite of their shackles. Their heads were erect, their shoulders thrown back, as they stepped along in the dust of the road. Their skins were of coppery bronze. Their arms and legs and thighs lithe and straight. Arms and ankles were covered with bracelets of silver, and silver helmets were on their heads. Flung across the shoulder of each captive was a mantle of silky wool, which by the dignity of its wearing added to the nobility of its wearer.

"Infidels! Dogs!" An old woman in the street spat upon the captives who had been chiefs in their ravaged land.

"*Viva* Cortés!" again the cry rang out from coach and carriage, balcony and rooftop.

Then there was a break in the line and after a second's pause a new cry rang out.

"*Mira!* Pizarro! Behold Francisco Pizarro! *Viva España! Viva Extremadura! Viva* Pizarro, the conqueror!" Old and young, rich and poor, took up the cry.

A pale gaunt man, who wore no armor but instead a suit of black cloth and who carried in his hand a broad white sombrero matching his white boots and buskins, came riding on a coal-black horse. He had not the look of culture seen on the face of Cortés, but his bearing was martial; he was tall and straight of shoulder and he smiled a warm, generous smile as his head was bowed in greeting, though his eyes had the far-away

gaze of one who looks into the future and reads what it holds in store.

Beside him rode his captain, Pedro de Candia by name, and by both name and appearance a Greek, clad in full armor, his helmet carried by his squire who rode behind. Fine woolen fabrics made the saddle blankets of Pizarro and Pedro de Candia, and from their saddle-bows hung vases of gold and of silver.

Claiming almost equal attention with the heroes were three strange animals lifting their tiny hoofs from the dust of the road. Three llamas they were, looking like camels, but much smaller in size and without the humps of the camels, led by strange captives from the land whose children worshiped the sun.

"Strange sheep, these," exclaimed a beggar, but his companion answered: "They are no sheep, but beasts of burden, and there are millions of them in the lands across the sea."

Curious bystanders pushed forward, examining the animals on all sides. When one drew too near a llama spat out its cud upon him as if in retaliation for the indignity offered the captive chief who had gone ahead. Then the three animals moved forward, their nostrils curling in scorn, their queer heads held superciliously high, bobbing about like kites at the ends of strings above the heads of their beholders.

Ines Suarez on her horse watched the cortège pass by. Her eyes wore a troubled look. A shadow of disappointment lay on her passive brow.

"Long live the heroes! Long live the *conquistadores!*" The cry rose on every hand. She tried to join in the cheering, but disappointment clouded her joy. *"Ojala!"* she said, and sighed as she said it. "These

men are old, and the years are upon them." She glanced furtively about, lest someone read the treason in her mind.

In the ignorance of her youth she ignored the hardships that age faster than years: the starvation and the thirst, the fever and the chill, the burden of responsibility, the terrors of unknown sea and unknown land that these men she called old had endured. Yet even had she reasoned it thus, a hero of forty-three and one whose years numbered fifty-seven would still have been old, old, in the eyes of a girl of seventeen.

"A hero should be young," her heart told her, "with lithe limbs and the shoulders of a god. A conqueror should have the steel of youth in his arms and the gleam of youth in his eye."

But even as she mused, she heard again the sound of trumpet and drum and the merry note of the flageolet ring out on the air. A cry arose from the crowd.

"Ai!" they cried. "Look. The soldiers. The soldiers of Spain! They come. The King's soldiers who triumphed in Italy are accompanying the conquerors on their march."

Ines Suarez' heart bounded to her throat. A mist swam before her eyes as down the road came the soldiers, their horses glistening in mail, themselves clad in full armor except that their helmets were doffed in deference to their fair spectators. Soldiers in Spain did not wear helmets in the presence of ladies any more than they wore them in the house of God. Moreover, this being a peaceful occasion, they were dressed for parade—for review. Battle-hammers hung at their saddlebows and in his right hand each soldier grasped a lance tipped with steel and hung with a silken pennon.

"Long live the soldiers of the King! Long live the heroes of Spain!" The cry went up from the road, from doorway, from balcony, from rooftop.

At the head of the column rode one, a captain by his armor, lithe of limb, straight of shoulder, with mustaches curling upward from lips that were warm and sensual, with grave brown eyes opened amorously wide to the temples, glancing this way and that. A foot-soldier—an arquebusier—by rank, but for the pageant and the journey to Guadalupe he was mounted on a horse which he rode as a centaur might ride, as if horse and rider were one.

Ines Suarez clutched her reins, and Fuegito, feeling the pull of her hands, leaped forward almost in the path of the procession.

For an instant the eyes of the soldier were upon her. For an instant she looked aghast. Then each recognizing the other, their eyes met for a moment.

"Pedro de Valdivia!" said Ines Suarez with her lips.

"Flamencita!" his lips murmured, and at the same instant his right hand lifted his lance from its iron shoe as if in token of salute. A moment the lance was lifted. A moment the pennon waved. Then the soldier overcame the lover. The lance snapped back into its socket. The soldier's eyes stared ahead of him down the road.

Ines tugged at the reins of Fuegito, pulling him back clear of the road. Then she sat as one in a trance, gazing after the column of soldiers, her heart beating wildly in her throat.

"Pedro de Valdivia!" she murmured. "My hero. There goes a conqueror who is young!"

After the soldiers had passed, the crowd of spectators scattered around the gate of Navalmoral.

Ines sat on her horse as if she were rooted to the spot, watching the cloud of dust kicked up by the horses as they journeyed down the road to Guadalupe.

"Cortés will return to New Spain," she heard someone remark in passing, "for the King has made him a Marquis."

"And Francisco Pizarro has received an order from the King to raise a force of men and conquer the land called Peru. He is to be Governor and Captain-General of the country. He is to receive as salary, seventy-five thousand *maravedis*. Already he is preparing to outfit his squadron in Sevilla."

Ines Suarez' heart was aflame as she heard the words. Already Francisco Pizarro was preparing to outfit his squadron. He was preparing to raise a force of men and to conquer the land called Peru. Would the soldiers of the King of Spain go with him? Would Pedro de Valdivia be among them, he with the strength of the conqueror in his arm and the gleam of the conqueror in his eye? And the passion of her longing to follow in the footsteps of her hero burst upon her and urged her whole being forward.

She gathered the reins in her hot hands and was turning her horse southward along the road the procession had followed. But what was that troop of women ahead of her moving on foot down the road? It was an unknown sight in the eyes of Ines Suarez, but in the eyes of Spain, in the eyes of the world, it was old. It was a body of women, audacious, voluptuous women, of a type which since time began have followed the footsteps of soldiers.

For a moment Ines Suarez surveyed them. Mystified, she watched the women swinging down the road, their broad hips swaying boldly, invitingly, their long skirts trailing in the dust. She heard the coarse sallies of the men, and with understanding new-born in her heart, she turned her horse's head toward home and ambled slowly, reluctantly, back along the road that led to Plasencia.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PATIENCE! PATIENCE!

IT WAS to a shocked and horrified household that Ines Suarez returned from her journey to Navalmoral.

Old Pancho, hearing her horse's tread on the cobbled entrance, flung back the fortress door and stared at the dust-covered figure as if she were one demented. But Ines was never more sane. She flung the reins over his trembling hand and leaped lightly to the flags of the courtyard.

The old man held finger to his lips and shook his head with hint of warning. He pointed significantly toward the stairway up which Ines must go to Doña Catalina's room.

Old Luz came hurrying from the kitchen, wiping her hands on her skirt. She scrutinized Ines' face as if to read, by woman's intuition, whether her charge had returned the virgin she had departed. Ines smiled and swept the old woman into her arms, then with head high and shoulders erect she glided up the old stone steps—a priestess bearing the sacred fire.

"Santa Purissima!" Doña Catalina, seated in her ample chair, fat hands folded on fat stomach, made an attempt to rise but slumped back, too heavy for the effort. *"Santa Purissima!"* she repeated. "Where have

you been? We feared you had fallen into the Jerte; or been carried off by bandits."

"Neither," replied Ines with exuberance. "I have been on a journey—to Navalmoral. I have seen the *conquistadores* — Hernando Cortés and Francisco Pizarro! Oh, the procession! You should have seen it, *tia mia!* The heretics from the far lands! The strange animals! The soldiers—accompanying the cavalcade on its way to Guadalupe . . . !"

"Jesús mil veces!" Doña Catalina's voice shrilled out. "You have been alone on a journey? A daughter of the house of Suarez? Is it that you are a gipsy, that you go riding unaccompanied about the country, giving scandal to your father's household and to Holy Mother the Church, which has taught meekness and humility in women?"

Ines' answer was soft and low but it held a ring of determination. "I am no gipsy," she said, drawing herself up to her full height. "Neither am I a canary in a wooden cage, nor a *mora* in the harem of Abderama. I am a woman of seventeen and we are living in the sixteenth century, in the year fifteen twenty-nine, not in the days of the Moors who locked their women behind iron bars. *Tia mia,* I shall ride where I like—and when. And next time my journey will take me much, much farther."

"Holy Virgin, hear her!" Doña Catalina's voice grew more piercing, more shrill. "You will do nothing of the kind. You will remain in Plasencia and in your home like a virtuous woman while you live under one roof with me."

Ines was calm. She did not tell her that it was her

roof and not her aunt's; nor that it was not roofs she wanted, but freedom. She merely asked:

"And what shall I do in this house, pray tell me, *tia querida?* Shall I watch from the window while the sheep graze on the hills, or the old women gossip by the fountain? What else is there left for me in Plasencia, with all Spain going out to the new world?"

"You will find plenty to do here," Doña Catalina told her, "embroidering your shawl or your *camisa,* going to mass of a morning, saying your beads at night, learning the domestic virtues of woman, marrying some good man in the end."

"But there are no good men left to marry," laughed Ines. "There are only old Pancho and the barber at the inn and a few such tottering old men who could not make an angel happy."

"There is Agustin Padilla," Doña Catalina reminded. "He is kin to me. He is a good boy and has loved you since a child."

"Agustin Padilla! That boy?" Ines' laugh rang out. "With the name that smells of the frying-pan and the kitchen! With perfume on his gloves like a woman! With legs as wobbly as a new-born lamb! I shall marry no one but a soldier who, at least, can stand firmly on his two legs. And of such there are none in Plasencia. Therefore, I shall go where soldiers go. Don Francisco Pizarro is fitting out a squadron in Seville, and when it is ready——"

Had Ines proposed going to hell to consort with the damned, the effect on her aunt could have been no worse.

"In a ship! With a squadron of men!" Her voice became a quavering treble. She had risen to her feet

and stood a towering mountain of flesh, her hands outstretched like a cross. "A *soldadera!*" she cried out. "A follower of the camp. A daughter of the house of Suarez going out with a squadron of men!" and she fell swooning to the floor.

For a moment Ines stood motionless. Then she dropped to her knees beside her aunt, loosening the old woman's stays, calling to Luz for aid, chafing the wrists and the purple cheeks of the aunt who had called her by an evil name—a woman who follows the soldiers, her long skirts trailing in the dust.

Old Luz stood and wrung her hands. Old Pancho ran for the barber at the inn, he being *médico* as well. But neither the letting of blood through the opening of a vein in her arm (though the aspect of the moon was favorable) nor the use of the cupping glass after proper scarification of the shoulder, nor the juice of pimpernel applied to the nostrils was of the slightest avail. Tia Catalina remained in an unconscious condition on the floor of her room. Later, with the help of the barber and old Pancho and Luz, they got the old woman safely into her bed. They applied horse-leeches to the back of her head. The lungs of a fresh-killed lamb were laid upon her forehead. These all having no power, Ines sent old Pancho for the bishop.

The bishop came and administered the rites of the Church. Ines, overcome with remorse, prayed hour after hour before the statue of the Virgin in her room, vowing that if the life of her aunt should be spared, she would remain with her in Spain as long as Doña Catalina lived. She would forget ships and soldiers and the new world, though the heart in her body wither.

Her vow was put to the test. On the seventh day

Doña Catalina's lips moved. Only the lips, however. Speech was forever gone. Paralysis had stricken the right side, and only by great effort and the help of old Luz and Pancho could she be moved occasionally from bed to chair and back from chair to bed.

Yet Ines' prayer had been answered. Doña Catalina lived, and Ines was held to her vow. Likewise, as her aunt had predicted, she found plenty to do in Plasencia.

Day after day Ines watched by the bedside of her aunt, applying scent to her nostrils, rose cakes and violet flowers; anointing her shoulders and backbone with the oil of sweet almonds or her temples with rose vinegar or grated nutmeg. With her own hands she cooked the *olla podrida*. With her own hands she cut up a fowl. With her own hands she fed her aunt, and though sometimes Doña Catalina's lips moved in an effort to speak, the words did not come.

The days became weeks. The weeks became months. Still life persisted in the stricken body and Ines' vow to the Virgin held firm.

Only the dreams of Ines Suarez were free. Held to the bedside of the stricken woman by glassy-bright eyes that guarded her as a sentinel guards a prisoner in a tomb, Ines would gaze wistfully through the bedroom window to the arched bridge of the Romans spanning the River Jerte. Beyond that bridge was the road that led southward to the sea. There galleons weighed anchor, sailing out to the world of adventure.

Sometimes of an afternoon, while Tia Catalina slept, Ines would steal away to the cathedral, praying, as she knelt before the stations that marked the way to Calvary that her own shoulders might be given strength to bear their cross. Sometimes she dreamed of wrecks; of

galleons turned back from stormy seas. Again she envisioned dream ships riding at anchor in the bay—ships that had waited too long to make the voyage.

At mass she heard of miracles; of ships that had been carried through storm by the direct intervention of the saints; of victories won for Christ and the King; of gold newly discovered to enrich the coffers of Spain and to bring more heretics to Christ. Bits of news flew broadcast across the ocean and filtered through Spain to the Church and through the Church to the people as surely and as mysteriously as the bees carried pollen from almond to almond, or from olive blossom to olive blossom in the groves.

And every miracle conveyed the same truth. God had opened the new world to Spain that Spain should rule it, should Christianize it. God and his angels and saints had decreed that Spain should dominate the earth.

Whenever a squadron set forth from San Lúcar, from Palos, from Cadiz, prayers were offered for its safety, and for the safety of the men who sailed with it. Later, after months had passed, the bishop told of its safe landing at Nombre de Dios or at Santa Marta in the new world, guided thither by some apparition of a saint or by the miraculous intervention of an apostle's hand.

It was thus that Ines Suarez learned that Don Francisco Pizarro had sailed in January, 1530, for the new world, while she who had hoped to join his squadron was chained by her vow to the bedside of a paralytic aunt.

It was thus she learned that Don Francisco, with his three brothers, Hernando, Gonzalo, and Juan, and a

half-brother named Francisco Martin de Alcántara, had conquered the country called Peru, which the King of Spain had rechristened New Castile. She learned in the same way how Francisco Pizarro, with only two hundred Spaniards, had overcome a horde of infidels called Incas, who worshiped the sun as god. How Pizarro and his men had mowed the infidels down with their musketry, had gibbeted them with their pikes, had cut their bodies to pieces with sharp rapiers, that their souls might go the sooner to God.

The bishop said a mass in thanksgiving to St. Michael, who had aided the Spaniards to victory and thwarted the hands of the enemy.

Later, in the same manner, always through the Church, Ines learned of the voyage of Hernán de Soto, another Extremeño, from Xeres de Caballeros: how he had joined Francisco Pizarro in Peru, appearing with men and with ships in the time of greatest need, guided by the hand of the Virgin.

But of the one she most desired to hear—of Pedro de Valdivia—she heard nothing. Of him who had held her in his arms, whose lips had held hers in the moonlight with the fierce passion of the soldier hungry for woman, who had devoured her for a moment with his eyes while his lips murmured *"Flamencita,"* who had saluted her with pennoned lance and disappeared in the dust of the road—of him she heard never a word.

Had he gone with Francisco Pizarro to New Castile? Was he one of the two hundred and fifty soldiers who had overcome the hordes of infidels? Or was he with Cortés in New Spain? Or in Spain with the army of the King? These were the questions she asked herself, over and over. And at night she would repeat the

questions, wondering more and more. Had Pedro de Valdivia sailed his white ship westward? Was his one of the wrecks of which she was continually dreaming? Or was it one of those riding at anchor, beaten by angry waves, having waited too long for the voyage?

These were Ines' thoughts, as she knelt before the stations of the cross praying until her knees were numb, as she sat by the bedside of her Aunt Catalina, who was dead in life, while she, with the urge for life and love consuming the soul within her, she who had felt the lips of a lover but once and the strong arms of the soldier crushing her to his breast, must keep her vow to the Virgin.

Nightly her thoughts were interrupted by the light tinkle of the lute, or a voice speaking beneath her window. With leaden foot she would go to the casement, knowing that Agustin Padilla would be there, standing in the street below. Sometimes Ines would let him linger a few moments while she whispered from the balcony above his head, and the talk would be of such general nature as the yield of olives or the price of sheep. But more often Ines would put finger to her lip and whisper wearily: "Go you with God, Agustin, my aunt sleeps." Then she would return to her vigil at the bedside and before the echo of his heels died away in the street below, Agustin Padilla would pass from her mind.

But she could not forget Pedro de Valdivia. Always she could see his eyes, grave, amorous, devouring. Then she would remember the soldiers and the women who had followed them, their long skirts trailing in the dust of the road.

Old Luz watched Ines day by day. Sometimes

seeing the soft bosom rise and sink in the weary sigh of one who is sick for love, the old woman would take the young one in her arms and murmur:

"*Paciencia,* my child! *Paciencia!* Each one in this world must bear his cross, but sorrow does not last always and every prison has its door."

CHAPTER NINE

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

IT WAS more than three years, however, before the door of Ines' prison opened and death laid its cold finger on the brow of Doña Catalina, while the almond trees blossomed like fairy clouds and nature made parade of its powers of recreation.

But Ines Suarez had kept her vow. She had won her first battle—the battle with her own conscience. She had remained with her aunt while life lasted. The iron of purpose had entered into her soul. Her passive brow had developed determination. Her resolute nose was all the more resolute for her years of privation. Now she was free—if any woman of twenty-three in sixteenth-century Spain could be said to be free.

They buried Doña Catalina in the cemetery of the cathedral, thrusting aside the old bones of her ancestors and the younger bones of Doña Elena, that there might be room in the ovenlike grave for one more of the house of Suarez.

The ceremony over, Ines turned from the grave of the woman whose bedside had been a living grave to her and breathed a long, deep sigh. Then her breath came faster. The mourners were gathered in little groups. In one group was the Bishop of Plasencia, talking with Don Frey Francisco de Rivera, a priest of the military order.

Ines moved from group to group exchanging a word with each, then she paused near the bishop and Don Frey Francisco and listened. But they were not talking of the woman they had buried. They spoke, as most of Spain was speaking in that day, of ships and squadrons and of routes to the new world.

"Don Francisco Pizarro has conquered most of the infidels in New Castile," Frey Francisco was saying. "He has taken from the Incas—Children of the Sun they call themselves—five million ducats of gold. He has seized the Inca Atahualpa, the infidel emperor, and has slain him and his heretic retainers as many as hands could be laid upon. True, the Inca Atahualpa had paid for his ransom with all the gold his dungeon could hold, a room twenty-two feet long and seventeen feet high and as tall as the stature of a man and a half; also as much silver as the adjoining rooms could contain, five million ducats. One fifth will of course come to the King. Already it is on its way to the royal treasury. The rest will be divided among the conquerors. Every soldier will be rich."

The Bishop of Plasencia heard and drew a cross on his forehead. So did Ines Suarez, who stood near.

"Was it right?" asked the bishop, "that the Inca Atahualpa should have been slain after paying for his ransom with so much gold?"

"Of a certainty," laughed Frey Francisco. "It is only by such cunning that a handful of two hundred and fifty Christians can conquer such numbers of infidels."

"After all," said the bishop, nodding his head, his long white locks brushing his shoulders, "it is for Christ and the King. So much wealth was never intended to

remain in the hands of infidels. It must be used for the glory of God and to enrich the treasury of Spain."

"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth to the King of Spain!" exclaimed Ines Suarez aloud. But in her heart she thought: "Five million ducats of gold. One fifth for the royal treasury. The rest to be divided among the soldiers."

"Ai da mi!" said the bishop, and once more he made the sign of the cross on his forehead. "How can we remain in Spain longer, while servants of God are so much needed?" he asked.

Don Frey Francisco wondered.

So the two considered plans for arming a squadron. It could be done. Three strong ships well provisioned for a long voyage must first be obtained. They must carry plenty of wine for the sacrament on the altar. They talked long and earnestly of their plans: how the vessels must be strong, for the voyage was a long one and beset with every peril; of how only stout hearts were needed.

Ines Suarez, listening, heard them speak of this man or that who might be eager to go, or of this one or that who might help them to defray expenses, since the Empire of Spain aided none, each staking his worldly goods, his life, his all, on the chance that he might win gold for himself, glory for the King of Spain, and souls for the Kingdom of God.

"And where shall we find the stout hearts?" asked Don Frey Francisco. "For there remain few but beardless boys and old men in Extremadura."

It was then Ines Suarez spoke. "There are women in Extremadura," she said. "Women whose hearts are brave. I am one. Take me!"

Don Frey Francisco laughed merrily. The bishop looked down at Ines and smiled as if she were a child at his knee.

"Woman's place is at home," he said, "saying her prayers, telling her beads, embroidering her shawl and her *camisa,* marrying some good man."

Ines' eyes flashed fire. She had heard such words before. Yet to her sainted father her manner was all deference, all obedience.

"I have remained at home too long," she said. "I have embroidered many a shawl. My eyes are sick of the needle. I have told my beads until they are worn. There is no one to marry in Plasencia, only a few weak-kneed boys who have no soul for adventure and a few old men who could make only an angel happy. I can say my prayers as well in the new world as in Spain. Please, please, take me!" The longing in her heart welled up in her voice, her eyes.

The bishop continued to smile. Don Frey Francisco laughed merrily.

"Are not good women needed?" she asked. For she remembered the women who had followed the army—the women whose skirts trailed in the dust.

"Good women—yes," said the bishop. "But they should be well married and should cling very close to their husbands. You are far too beautiful, my child, without some good man for protection. For the sea is broad and full of peril and the land is a land of pitfalls."

Ines Suarez bowed her head and departed. Argument was useless in Spain. That she knew. She returned to her house of mourning and busied herself all through the day. But late that evening when she heard the first

footfall on the pavement and knew that Agustin Padilla had come, she set her lips firmly and walking straightway to the casement leaned out into the night and addressed him before ever he had time for one word:

"Yes, Agustin. I will marry you if you take me to New Castile. For the bishop is outfitting a fleet in Seville and he says that women are needed but that they must be accompanied by their husbands. But on one thing I must insist. I shall retain the name of Suarez, for I like it, and I do not care for Padilla, which savors too much of the frying-pan and the kitchen."

It was several moments before Agustin spoke. So accustomed had he grown to his nightly rejection, that it took time to adjust his mind to this acceptance of his oft-repeated plea. But haste was not needed in Spain, where the path to the nuptial altar was girt round with much formality. Nor was haste needed to reach Seville, where the outfitting of a fleet, even of the three small vessels, was an arduous undertaking, attended by many difficulties.

So another spring had come before Doña Ines de Padilla, who called herself Doña Ines de Suarez, accompanied by Agustin, her husband and legal protector, set out on the road to Seville. She dared not cast one backward glance after taking leave of Pancho and Luz, for their eyes were full of anguish and she must keep her spirit strong. So, head flung high and mounted on her horse, she rode to Seville beside her husband.

Along the old Roman road she journeyed; through Cáceres to the south; through the lime-powdered city of Trujillo, birthplace of Francisco Pizarro; through

Medellín, basking in the glory of Hernando Cortés of Mexico and his conquests; through Castuera de la Serena, where the farms lay neglected and weed-grown.

Ines took time and made use of opportunity while Agustin was seeing to the shoeing of the horses, to inquire the exact location of the farm owned by one Pedro de Valdivia. An old woman pointed it out. "Don Pedro has gone to New Castile," she offered. "He is fighting with Francisco Pizarro. *Muy soldado* is Don Pedro. *Muy hacendado* as well. If he were here you would know. There would not be one weed in his farm."

Very much a soldier! Very much a farmer, as well! Ines saw the plow rusting in the field and remembered the words of Don Pedro—his words spoken in the moonlight while his arms crushed her close and the bars of iron between them: "When my King sends for his soldier, he will find me at my plow."

So, the King had indeed sent for his soldier, and the plow lay rusting in the field. While she whom he had called *"Flamencita"* as their lips met under the stars, was journeying to Seville with her husband, bound for the land of adventure, praying her path and the path of Pedro de Valdivia might meet.

When she reached Seville at last and for the first time in her life beheld a ship—three ships—three pitiful little caravels—the *Piedad,* the *Libertad,* the *Misericordia*—they appeared as dream ships in her romantic young eyes. Dream ships of vast proportions, rocking at anchor in the Guadalquivir, gathering in two hundred men, most of them aged and infirm, who, as Ines had well said, could have made only an angel happy.

At Seville the banks of the Guadalquivir were alive with a motley of such men, feverishly fighting for passage, if it were the last act of their lives. For fresh tidings had come from Peru, or New Castile as they called it; tidings that told them they must hurry and share in the division of lands and gold that that country afforded.

Among the motley of men there was one presumptuous youth, a petulant sort of person in velvet doublet and breeches, who had been to Peru and had returned to Spain and was feverishly impatient to be off once more. He made great boast of his experiences. He had been secretary to Don Francisco Pizarro in Peru, so he said. He had witnessed the seizure of the Inca Atahualpa and his gold. He had received his share of the spoils. What was more, he had come back to Spain bearing the royal fifth to the King. Just now he had come from Toledo, where the King was holding Court.

A slight, dandyish young man, with up-curling silken mustaches and petulant, up-curving lips. His name was Sancho de Hoz, so he said. He boasted of his knowledge of New Castile, as he called it.

He did not admit, however, that he had gambled away his own share of the gold of Atahualpa, or that he had lost—by fair means or foul—a part of the royal fifth. Nor that he had been threatened with imprisonment for debt and had been granted respite by the King only on his promise to make new conquests, new discoveries of gold for the royal treasury.

He told how Francisco Pizarro, after slaying the Inca Atahualpa, had marched on the city of Cuzco, the golden throne, the capital of the Incas' country.

The adventurers, waiting on the shores of the Guadalquivir for the order to take to the ships, asked all manner of questions.

"Did Don Francisco Pizarro and his soldiers find much gold in the city of Cuzco? Was there more to be found?" This was the oft-repeated question.

Sancho de Hoz, proud of his superior knowledge, strode about the mole at Seville, slapping his sword against his *borceguies* and telling a tall tale.

"Surely! Don Francisco has found gold. Gold in plenty. And there is much more to be found. The Incas had plenty of time to hide it. The million ducats or more did not represent the half that exists."

"How much gold did each soldier receive?" asked one of the old men, whose name was Pepe, a herder of turkeys from Coria. "How much for each horseman?" asked another, whose name was Alvaro and who had been cavalryman in Spain before his age had retired him. "How much for each foot-soldier?" asked another, one whom they called Tio Pocitos, who had once been smith to the King.

Sancho de Hoz curled his petulant lip. "Each horseman received six thousand *pesos de oro,*" he said. "The foot-soldiers about half that sum." He flecked the air with his sword. "A mere trifle," he said. "A mere trifle. There is plenty more gold in the new world for him who knows where to find it." Once more he struck his sword against his buskin and strode off, swaggering down the mole.

"Six thousand *pesos de oro!*" exclaimed Alvaro, who had been cavalryman. "Half that sum for the foot-soldiers," said old Pepe, who had been herder of turkeys. The eyes of the other men brightened.

Ines Suarez looked at her husband and both looked at the Bishop of Plasencia.

"So much talk of gold," said the bishop, "but little of the souls brought to Christ. *Ai da mi!*" he repeated. "Men of God are greatly needed, for the hearts of men are sorely tempted by gold."

"What did Sancho de Hoz mean?" asked the foot-soldier of the King, "about plenty of gold to be had if only one knew where to find it? Surely Don Francisco Pizarro and Don Diego de Almagro, the *conquistadores,* know where the gold is to be found."

But there was no time for further discussion. The order had been given to take to the ships, and excitement was running high.

It was on a Friday in May that *La Libertad* slipped her cables and with the banner of the green cross of Carlos the Fifth of Spain flying from her masthead, set out for the land of romance.

Ines Suarez' heart swelled with ecstasy as *La Libertad* lifted on the waves and stood out for the Canaries, followed by the *Piedad,* and the *Misericordia,* their lateen sails shimmering in the sun.

"What a handful of men we are," said one; "merely a handful of men tossed about on the ocean." He failed to include Ines Suarez. She was but a woman accompanying her husband.

"It is only a handful that is needed," said the bishop as he blessed his fleet, "if God is on the side of the few."

History makes only brief mention of the voyage of that little flotilla. The *Misericordia* was found unseaworthy and turned back at Gomera in the Canaries. The other two vessels went forward until the *Piedad*

was lost, swallowed up by the sea during one black night of hurricane. Only a few spars were seen when morning broke over the waters.

"Luck of the sea!" said the crew of *La Libertad,* bolstering up their courage. So they sailed on, with their captain and the Bishop of Plasencia; with Don Frey Francisco de Rivera; with Ines de Suarez and her husband, Agustin, who was far more protected than protector; and with the seventy-odd old men who could have made only an angel happy.

Of the storms encountered at sea; of the seasickness and the heartsickness and the physical disorders from eating moldy biscuit; of the eternal diet of salt sheep and salt pork and the eternal smell of rancid fruits in the hold; of the plague that came upon them when the wine in their wineskins was exhausted and the water had leaked from their casks; of the arms and legs that were broken and left to the mercy of God to knit; of the bodies that were bruised and swollen by battering seas; of the sores that festered for want of treatment—of these no chronicler speaks. Such was the lot of the adventurer who went out from Spain in that day.

Ten men died from scurvy in one night, their bodies dropped overboard at dawn, their souls consigned to their Maker.

Among them was Agustin Padilla. Ines de Suarez, his widow, dropped a tear on his shroud, murmuring, *"Pobrecito! Pobrecito!* Poor little fellow, indeed. He was far too frail for such a journey."

Yet hers was the strength of ten men. Young, full of energy and vigor, indifferent to her own pain or hardship, her beautiful brow unruffled by the trials that made strong men falter, her eyes forever fixed on

the west, she was an inspiration and a guardian angel to the men who sailed with her on *La Libertad*.

Her chestnut hair piled high on her delicate head, her hands never restless, never idle, dauntless of will and of purpose, she moved about the ship as softly as a cat and with the same undulation, ministering now to a dying man, now cheering one sick from nostalgia, now binding the wounds of the injured. She was far too preoccupied with others to give much thought to herself.

Some of the chroniclers have written of a mutiny that broke out in the crew that sought to turn back on its course; of three who were hanged from the arms of the lateen sails as a matter of ship's discipline. But there is no confirmation of this. It may have happened on *La Libertad*. It happened on many a ship where men went mad from drinking sea water.

Of one thing history is sure. *La Libertad* reached Nombre de Dios. The time was late in November. The year was 1536. More than half its complement of men had perished on the voyage. The others, with courage that far surpassed their bodies, landed on the Isthmus of Darien, ready for the long march overland to the Pacific.

Nor did they falter during that long journey, through fever-ridden swamp, through jungle infested with poisonous reptiles, over mountains heavily forested with trees and flowering shrubs.

To Ines Suarez each step of the journey was a step nearer the heaven of her desire. Her eyes had the light of the crusader as she marched day after day with the men. Giant ferns grew at her feet and sent up their hot moist breath as they rose to arch above her

head. Strange fruits hung ripe on strange trees. These she devoured, seeming wisely to judge whether they were poisonous or not. Tangles of vines like ships' cables festooned themselves from tree to tree. She stifled in the sticky sweet air of the tropics by day and when the sun went down of an evening she shivered, but there were strange birds of gay plumage wheeling above her head. There were chattering parrakeets perched in neat green rows over her head in the branches.

Yet her path was a well-worn one and hacked through forested mountain by the hundreds of other adventurers who had preceded her on the way.

It was at the end of the third day's march that she heard the tinkle of mulebells and saw a pack train heavily laden approaching through the trees. And when she inquired of the soldier who guarded the train what manner of freight he carried, he told her frankly that it was gold.

But his face wore a look of disappointment as he said it, and when the Bishop of Plasencia and the old men who followed her on the march gathered about the soldier, they saw a rueful countenance in spite of the pack train of gold.

"It is not mine," said the soldier. "It is the royal fifth, bound for the treasury of Spain. And it may be that this will be the last. For the Incas have risen in revolt. They have fired the city of Cuzco. They have laid siege to the country and when I left the City of Kings, word had come from Cuzco how the infidels were shooting burning arrows into the thatched-roof buildings of the Christians. Red-hot stones wrapped in cotton were being tossed over the walls of Cuzco.

True, the Spanish cavalry in defense rushed upon the Indians and cut them to pieces, but the infidels resorted to the lasso, entangling it about the legs of the horses, bringing the Christians to the ground. Trujillo was besieged as well as Cuzco and, even as Don Francisco Pizarro gave me orders to proceed with this gold to Panama, the passes were captured by the enemy. It was only through knowing the by-roads that I escaped with the gold. I saw the heads of two of my good friends and companions, struck off by the battle-axe, rolled into the *plaza.*"

The hardened soldier closed his eyes as if to shut out the memory. Then, clicking his heels together, he set off with his mule train, guarding his pack of gold on its route to the Atlantic and to Spain.

A shiver passed through Ines Suarez' body as she turned her face toward the Gulf. Then her shoulders were stiffened, her head was flung high, and accompanied by the Bishop of Plasencia and the squad of old men, she took up her march.

Eagerly she pushed on with the rest, hurrying to the port of Panama, anxious to learn if there might be fresh news from the country to the south. Her determination did not flag. She hurried on, eager to reach a ship. So did her companions. Not one among them was so old but his soul of adventure ran high.

"The greater the danger," they agreed, "the greater the reward."

It was long after they reached Panama, however, before their reward was in sight. Their bishop lay ill in his tent, delirious with fever from his long march through the jungle, while those who had come out with him paced the shores of the port, impatiently watching

for a ship, eagerly searching for provisions to carry them on their voyage southward.

Ines Suarez, more impatient than the rest, yet holding her desires in check, busied herself about the bedside of the bishop or gathered information about ships.

The funds that the bishop had gathered in Spain were low, and the price of every commodity was high. Since the first rush of gold in Peru, prices in Panama had gone soaring. A good horse cost twenty-five hundred *pesos de oro;* a pair of shoes cost thirty; a sword was forty or fifty. It took much haggling and persuading to buy even the bare necessities of life.

Because she was a woman with a woman's intuitive sense of values, she investigated the matter of provisions. But she learned more than the price of horses and swords, of foods and shoes and garments. She learned what the touch of gold can do to the souls of men. She learned what the Bishop of Plasencia had meant when he had told her in Spain that a woman who came to the new world had need to cling close to her husband.

Ines' legal protector was gone. Her bishop lay ill in his tent. She was alone in a tropical land where the passions of men burned at white heat, where men with the lust for women in their veins and the lust for gold in their eyes wasted no time in finesse, but went straight for the thing they most desired.

To them Ines Suarez was a woman alone, and a woman alone in that land and that age was man's prey —his *soldadera*—who had followed the feet of the soldiers, and any man's woman who could win her.

But he who could win Ines Suarez was not waiting at the port of Panama. As a tigress guards her young,

Ines guarded the treasures of her womanhood, assuming a masculine hardness, showing the canine whiteness of her teeth behind the red lips of her smile, meeting with a look of contempt the overtures of the daring.

Sometimes at night as she lay on her cot, inhaling the exotic fragrance of flowers and looking out at the black hills of Darien lying velvety under the stars, she would hear a sound outside her tent. Then she would reach beneath her pillow to feel if her dagger was safe. The sound may have been the soft step of one with lecherous intent, or it may have been but the thud of overripe fruit dropping from the trees; but Ines Suarez was on her guard.

One evening as she left the tent of the bishop, having made sure that he was comfortable for the night, she walked in the direction of her quarters and her route lay through the dark, narrow lanes to the shore. The black night of the tropics that follows on the last rays of the sun had fallen before she reached her destination, and before she had gone very far she became aware of someone following behind her. She quickened her steps, hoping to reach the oblong of light that flickered from the *cantina* on the corner. In a moment she heard someone running and she too started to run, but she felt the clutch of arms from behind, of rapacious hands pressing her breasts, of mustaches smearing across her cheek.

Without a word of outcry, she whipped her dagger from its scabbard, wrenched herself free and whirled about facing her assailant. It was dark and she could not recognize his features, but she heard a low laugh and a voice saying:

"Not so fast, little cat! Not so fast! Sheathe your

claws. Come, purr awhile in my arms." He made a quick motion as if to strike the dagger from her grasp.

But Ines was as quick as the cat he called her. With an upward motion she struck at his wrist.

His sharp outcry of pain told her the dagger had cut his flesh.

"When I purr," she said, "it will be in the arms of a hero and not a coward."

A light streamed from the doorway of the *cantina* ahead. A gang of roistering soldiers who had heard the commotion came tumbling into the narrow street, armed with swords and with torches.

Their lights showed the figure of a petulant young man whose curling lip ill concealed the expression of pain caused by the wound, which was bleeding profusely. Ines recognized the man she had seen swaggering on the mole at Seville. It was Sancho de Hoz, who said he had been secretary to Pizarro. It was he who had been saved from a debtor's prison on condition that he conquer new lands; who had gambled away his profits and lost the funds of the King.

The roisterers from the *cantina* clustered about Sancho de Hoz and Ines Suarez, eager to witness the sport of woman defending her body. But Ines, casting a withering glance on her assailant, said:

"Go back to your scribbling, young man, and leave the conquering of women to soldiers."

A shout of merriment, of applause, went up from the soldiers, some of whom approached her, saying: "I am a soldier! Try me!" but she held her dagger in her hand and, turning on her heel, made her way to the shore.

These, however, are trifling matters, and scarcely

worth the telling in a tale that deals with conquerors and with perils by sea and by land.

Far fitter to tell of those heroes who restlessly paced the shore, eager to try their fortunes in Peru and take what fate had to offer. For there were heroes in plenty, many of them young, dauntless souls who had hurried out from Spain to Hispaniola, to Tierra Firma, to Venezuela, to the Caribbees, at the first rumor of gold and land in the west. Now they thronged the shores of Panama, eager to push on to Peru. Some were middle-aged and had fought with Cortés in Mexico, but having lost out in the allotments of land, wanted to try their luck elsewhere. Some were old, old men, veterans of earlier wars in Spain, willing to give their last breath for the feel of gold in their fingers.

Some who had felt the gold, and who had fought with Pizarro in Peru, had returned to Panama at his order to beg more ships, more men, more money or provisions with which to continue the conquest. Some who had had their share of gold and had let it slip through their fingers paced the shore by day and by night hung over the gambling tables, winning and losing, winning and losing, gambling away in an hour what they had earned by their sweat and blood.

These all would visit the Bishop of Plasencia, convalescent now in his tent, and after receiving the sacrament from his hand as he sat propped up on his pillow, would squat about him on the ground and entertain him with stories of their adventure.

Sometimes Ines Suarez stood near to make sure they did not tire the convalescent bishop. At such times her eyes would grow wide listening to the tales that they told. For much had happened in Peru since the Inca

Atahualpa had been killed and his five million ducats' worth of gold divided among the Spanish soldiers. The infidel revolt had been quelled. The two chief *conquistadores,* Francisco Pizarro and his companion, Don Diego de Almagro, had been made enormously rich. As for Hernando de Luque, who had been the third in the pact, who had secured from the Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa the money to embark on the first voyage—he was dead now and sleeping in his grave. He had no more need of gold or of conquest, nor of territory, either, seven feet being enough for him. Not so Pizarro and Almagro. All Peru must be divided between them. Not so simple a matter either, if the returned soldiers were to be believed, as they sat on the ground telling the Bishop of Plasencia all about it.

Francisco Pizarro was chief, of course, and should be governor of all Peru. Most of the soldiers agreed to that, though some took sides for Don Diego de Almagro. As for Don Diego, he believed the lion's share should be his and had communicated his belief to the King. So Carlos the Fifth had divided the land of Peru between them. That of Francisco Pizarro was to be called New Castile, and its limits were defined from a point near the line of Ecuador, two hundred and seventy leagues to the south, following the line of the coast. That of Diego de Almagro was to be known as New Toledo, and King Carlos decreed it should reach from Pizarro's territory thence two hundred leagues to the south following also the line of the coast. The eastern limits were not defined, since no one knew the width of the continent.

"And are the *conquistadores* satisfied with that?" asked the bishop.

Some of the soldiers shook their heads. "The trouble is, the King has not said to whom the city of Cuzco shall belong, and that is the greatest prize of all. So, while the King makes up his mind, Don Francisco Pizarro is settled in the city of Los Reyes, while Don Diego de Almagro has set off for the country to the south, a country that the Indians call 'Chile' and which is said to be far richer than anything yet found."

While the soldier was speaking there was a shuffling of feet in the doorway. Ines Suarez, turning, saw Sancho de Hoz standing there. She moved to a distant part of the tent and joined a group of the old men who had come out with her on *La Libertad*.

Sancho de Hoz, ignoring the act, entered into the conversation of the soldier. "So Don Diego de Almagro has gone to find the land of Chile?" he said, and his lip curled with sarcasm.

"He went, but he has returned," said the soldier, "for he found nothing but mountain and desert. He returned with an army of specters, saying he would not give the whole land of Chile to eat to fifty of his poorest soldiers."

"Yet the Indians of Peru have told that there are mountains of silver and gold and rivers of pearls in the land of Chile to the south." It was a second soldier who spoke, one who had come up from Peru to beg for men and ships with which to continue the conquest.

"But who is there to discover it, to conquer it, since Diego de Almagro could not succeed?" a third soldier asked.

"Don Diego is old and ill from the vices of his youth," said the first soldier. "There are plenty of

discoverers who have youth and strength. There is Pedro de Valdivia, for example——"

Ines Suarez' hand fluttered to her throat to still the beating of her heart. Then she stood as one fixed to the spot, listening to the soldier.

"Valdivia is a soldier, young, skilled at arms, fearless. Don Pizarro knows his worth. Has he not said that the little finger of Pedro de Valdivia is of more value than four Pizarros or as many Don Diego de Almagros? If another expedition sets out to conquer Chile it will be Pedro de Valdivia who will lead it, mark you that."

A hiss came from the doorway. Ines Suarez, turning, saw the curling lip of Sancho de Hoz. His face wore the look of a dog whose bone is being snatched from him. But she had time to see no more, for while the soldier was speaking, Sancho de Hoz turned on his heel and with a snarl was gone.

As for Ines Suarez—from that moment she knew no peace while she waited for a ship to take her to Peru. Pedro de Valdivia was in Peru!

At last the great day came. Hernando Cortés in Mexico, learning the need of Pizarro for more arms and supplies, sent one Rodrigo de Grijalva to Panama with a ship loaded with arms and trappings, with garments of silk for the conquerors, with uniforms for the soldiers and a rich robe of fur for the Marquis of Peru, his countryman. Then the Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa, *alcalde* of Darien, who had first advanced money to Pizarro and Almagro for the conquest, gathered in those men who waited so impatiently on the shore—in all two hundred and fifty souls—and set sail for the land of Peru.

With them sailed Sancho de Hoz, wearing a petulant look. With them also sailed Ines Suarez and her squad of fourteen old men who were all that remained of the original seventy from *La Libertad*. These swore they would not move one step unless their guardian angel sailed with them.

The Bishop of Plasencia, still too weak for the journey and finding plenty to do in Panama, bade Ines good-bye, pressing a crucifix into her hand and saying: "Go you with God, my child. Carry the cross of Christ, and Heaven will guard you."

So, canvas spread to the winds, the ship of Don Francisco Pizarro, which for want of a better name we shall call *La Esperanza*—since it carried to Peru the hopes of those who sailed in it—stood out for the Mar del Sur, now known as the Pacific.

Everything on that voyage was strange, weird, mysterious. Though they were in the tropics, the wind turned chill before they had gone two days south. Though the month was January, it was called the midsummer season. Even the heavens above them were decked with strange constellations. The great shining Southern Cross mystified them as it guided them on their way.

They passed an island called the Isla de la Muerte (the Island of Dead Men), for it looked like a corpse with a fire burning on its chest. They passed the mouth of a river where floating islands of aquatic flowers slid lazily in the current.

For the first few days after they sailed out of the Gulf of Panama, the shores were green and fringed with giant trees. Later, as the trees receded, strips of brown sand lay along the shore and later still dun-

colored hills shrouded in mist came down to the sea, leaving the snow-capped peaks far inland towering to the sky.

Strange islands alive with strange birds rose out of the sea. The birds screamed and wheeled above them, darted about the ship, covered the waters before it, rising and falling with the waves. Schools of strange fat fish played about the ship like kittens and sea-lions waddled out from the shore barking their disapproval at the intrusion of these foreigners in their high-pooped vessel.

Throughout the voyage Sancho de Hoz was active, eager to show off his knowledge of the sea and the land. Now and then he would approach the captain, suggesting that he land at San Miguel, that they might reach their destination the sooner. But the captain was steering for the south.

"In latitude twelve degrees south, we shall find comfortable harbor," said the captain. "There a river comes down from the mountains and widens into a bay. We shall make landing there and the sooner reach the City of Kings."

"Why not the sooner reach Cuzco?" asked Sancho de Hoz. "Why bother with the city of Los Reyes."

Another day Sancho de Hoz urged the captain to make landing at Trujillo, but when they neared the harbor they saw *balsas* (the strange rafts of the natives) filled with Indians armed with clubs and poleaxes. They glowered at the galleon of the Christians and shot darts at it. Then some of the voyagers on the *Esperanza* joined with Sancho de Hoz, urging the captain to land.

"We are soldiers," they said. "We are armed. What have we to fear from a handful of natives? We have

set out for Peru and the sooner we reach it, the better."

But the captain and the Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa, putting their heads together, said: "At the city of Los Reyes we shall find better harbor, and come the sooner to the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro."

Sancho de Hoz protested.

"Why should we join the Marquis?" he said. "Let us land here at Trujillo and while the King is settling the dispute as to whom the city of Cuzco belongs, we can advance thither, and who knows but we ourselves may find this enchanted land called Chile? There, while the others divide up Peru, we can gather in the spoils of Chile and divide them amongst ourselves."

The Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa pounded the deck with his staff. "Don Francisco is the Marquis!" he said. "It is to join him we have come."

Sancho de Hoz dug his elbow into the ribs of a soldier companion. "Gold is for him who finds it," he said. "As for the Marquis and Don Diego de Almagro, there is plenty of bad blood between them. If we reach them we shall have to take sides."

"There is but one side," said Ines Suarez, clasping her crucifix to her breast. "It is the side of the right. Don Francisco Pizarro is the Marquis."

One of the old men stepped forward and joined her. It was Alvaro, who had been cavalryman in Spain. "Don Francisco is from Extremadura!" he said, "and we who are Extremeños shall fight with him to a man."

So, as frequently happens on shipboard, the voyagers began to form themselves into groups. Those who were not Extremeños insisted that the capital of the Incas belonged to Don Diego de Almagro, swearing that

when they reached Peru they should see that he got his rights.

Those who were from Extremadura were united for the Marquis, Don Francisco, while another and smaller group, headed by Sancho de Hoz, banded themselves together with the slogan: "Gold is for him who first finds it."

The hoarse voice of mutiny ran through the vessel.

"We should have landed at San Miguel," said some.

"Or at Trujillo at least," said others.

"We will make a landing tomorrow," said the third group, "or we will fling our captain to the fishes and take charge of the vessel ourselves."

They did not make a landing on the morrow, however, for that night a great storm came up. The wind rose and howled in its fury and battered the little galleon about like a cork. The waves mounted like great black hills that rocked and twisted the *Esperanza* while the strong Antarctic current writhed in protest beneath it. Sails were torn to ribbons. Masts and spars splintered like glass. At last the rudder was lost and the little vessel, abandoned to the elements, floundered helplessly for days.

Some of the men lost heart but the captain and Gaspar de Espinosa rallied them as hour after hour their situation seemed more and more helpless. Some knelt on the deck and prayed, asking forgiveness for their sins. Some believed it a punishment come upon them for taking sides in a quarrel when they should have thought of only Christ and the King. Others blamed the captain for failing to land them earlier before the storm came upon them.

Through it all Ines Suarez kept her faith, and raising her crucifix above her head said:

"Patience! Have faith. Watch and pray. God will lead us to land."

And on the third day, even as she said the words, the miracle occurred of which the chroniclers have written. For the sea began to go down and that night as they sang their *Salve Regina*—their Hymn to the Virgin—the sun set clear in the west, and in the morning while they were yet praying a white bird appeared before the ship and, hovering over the prow, seemed to be coaxing them to follow.

"It is the Holy Ghost!" Ines Suarez exclaimed, while the voyagers echoed: "It is the Holy Ghost, come to lead us to land."

Then the men took to the oars and, following the flight of the bird, they soon found themselves in a sheltered basin where brown hills sloped down to the shore and a rocky brown sentinel of an island protected them from the sea. There, too, the miracle preserved them, for, though the landing was made with difficulty, they finally found themselves on shore. They had trouble landing the horses, which were held to be as valuable as men. For some of the beasts, mad from thirst—having had no water for days—jumped overboard as they were landing and swam for the shore. Some of them broke their necks or their legs, but the greater number landed alive.

When at last the ship was unloaded and the voyagers found themselves on land surrounded by their horses and their military stores, their trappings and the gifts for their Marquis, they knelt down and gave thanks to God and to the Holy Ghost who had appeared in the

form of a bird. For they had reached the harbor which today is known as Callao, and the port which was and is today the port of the City of Kings, called then Los Reyes, today the city of Lima.

There was one, however, who lost no time in praying, nor did he wait for the order to march. It was Sancho de Hoz, who, gathering the group of dissenters who had stood by him on the ship, struck off along the road before the others had time to unload the ship.

Ines Suarez continued to kneel and to pray while the licentiate marshaled his army. When he had given the signal to march, she rose and with crucifix clasped to her breast, she followed in the wake of the army. But her skirts did not trail in the dust, for she rode mounted on a horse—a white horse with its white neck arched proudly—given her by the licentiate, who said it was her faith that had saved them. With her rode the squad of old men who had been with her since the voyage on the *Libertad* and who called her their guardian angel.

CHAPTER TEN

THE BATTLE OF LAS SALINAS

INES SUAREZ was indeed a guardian angel to the squad of old men who were ready to follow her blindly wherever she might lead. Had she not nursed them when they were ill and wounded on the voyage from Seville? Had she not stood by them and their bishop until the ship was ready at Panama? Had she not promised on the *Esperanza* that they would reach land alive? And had it not all happened as she had said?

They were alive and on land! In Peru—the country of their dreams, the land of gold. What if the soldiers of Pizarro had not found all the gold they hoped for? These infidel natives were cunning and sly as pet foxes. No doubt they had burrows where they concealed their gold. And what about this other land—this Chile—of which they were hearing? Suppose Don Diego de Almagro did fail to find it? Suppose he did come back with his army looking like specters and saying that the land was no good; that he would not give the whole land of Chile to eat to fifty of his poorest men? Don Diego was from Malagón and not to be believed as one would believe an Extremeño. What was it the rhyme said of Malagón, where Don Diego was born? *"En Malagón, a cada esquina un ladrón."* (In Malagón, a thief at every corner.) Thus the old men babbled.

They let their horses drink their fill and graze awhile on the grasses that grew about them in the fields, for the Incas had been industrious and wherever the Spaniards looked they saw rivers diverted into little veins to water the arid land.

When the horses had eaten and drunk, the old men were for examining the beds of the rivers to see if they were paved with gold, for prospecting along the shores for the pebbles of pearls large as hens' eggs. But Ines Suarez urged them to hurry, for they had three leagues to go before they reached the city of Los Reyes and already the sun was behind them and the army of Gaspar de Espinosa ahead. In Los Reyes, she urged, they would find Don Francisco, the Marquis, who had taken up his residence in the city he had founded while the King determined to whom the golden seat of the Incas rightfully belonged.

Not that it mattered a *maravedi* to Ines Suarez or the squad of old men to whom the King gave Cuzco. Don Francisco was an Extremeño and thus in their eyes the conqueror of all Peru. They would fight for him to a man, even though it carried them to the gates of hell. So they spurred their horses onward, trying to keep up with the others who had gone ahead.

But the road was rough and rocky and, after the first few miles, a gradual upward climb. Some of the men were stiff and unaccustomed to riding. Especially Pepe, the herder of turkeys from Coria, who had never been on horse before and had difficulty keeping his mount. So their pace was necessarily slow.

They were fifteen altogether, and they rode in single file with Ines Suarez at the head and the one whom they called Alvaro, who had been cavalryman in Spain,

following close behind her, while after them trailed the others, Pepe bringing up the rear. Now and then as they climbed they would hear a thud and a groan. It was Pepe who could not keep his mount. That and the breathing of the horses and the click of their hoofs on the stones were the only sounds they made as the road grew rougher and steeper.

At first they peered eagerly about them, searching for the animals with the golden horns, the trees with the golden leaves, of which they had heard in Spain, but when these did not appear, they found themselves glancing furtively about from left to right, beginning to realize that they were in the country of the enemy and that they did not know when one of the infidels might scurry from cover and attack them with his barbarous weapons. But they saw no enemy, either, as mile after mile they traveled. Once a native woman carrying her child on her back scampered away as they approached, peering like a frightened animal around the edge of a rock as they passed.

"It would seem that all the dogs of infidels are conquered," said Alvaro, "and that we have nothing to fear. Don Francisco Pizarro has done his work well. All is peace here in New Castile."

"Viva el Pizarro!" shouted the old men.

"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth to the King of Spain!" exclaimed Ines Suarez, spurring her horse with her heel.

A heavy, vaporous cloud hung between them and the sun. A thin dispiriting mist drifted down hour after hour, and although it was early February and summer in this strange land, a chilling breeze blew in from the sea.

Now they forded a stream. Now they hugged a hillside following a road made only for the bare feet of Indians and the tiny hoofs of llamas. Always they were reminded of Spain by the contour of the country, by the color of the rocks and the hills, but it was a less friendly land than Spain, wilder, more melancholy. And to Ines Suarez, who had been born in the green heart of Plasencia (thanks be to God and to man), the aridity of Peru seemed the dry bones of a desert.

Yet the rocks over which she climbed were slippery in the mist that constantly fell upon her and upon those who journeyed with her. Pepe's horse slipped and broke two of his legs. They left the horse to die on the road. What would you do? He was useless. He could no longer bear his rider. It was only by a miracle Pepe's own legs escaped. The others took turns giving Pepe a lift. It was hard enough on the other horses to support two riders at a time over a slippery, rocky road. It was hard on the whole column, and slowed them down to the pace of a snail.

Yet they urged themselves onward, telling themselves the City of Kings could not be very far away, for now and then they met a file of Indians bound together by chains, or a single Indian driving a flock of llamas. All carried quarried stones on their backs, the Indians as well as their flocks—and from the attitude of the bodies and the expressions on their faces, it would have been difficult to tell which was the beast of burden, the Indian or his llama. If anything, it was the llama that remained unconquered, carrying his head high, bobbing aloft on his long neck like a kite on the end of a string.

"Don Francisco must be building a city," said

Alvaro, noting the quarried stones on the backs of the Indians and llamas.

"We must be close to Los Reyes," Ines replied. "Soon we shall meet Don Francisco." But to herself she said: "God grant that Pedro de Valdivia may be with him, alive and well."

They were in truth very close to Los Reyes. In an hour at the most they would have reached the gates of the city, had not an accident befallen them. As they rounded a rocky cliff following a narrow ledge of rock a boulder rolled down across their path. Ines Suarez, riding ahead, heard a cry of warning from Alvaro and reined in her horse as the boulder crashed down before her, bringing with it a quantity of earth and loose rock.

It may have been hurled down by some native lurking high above them on the cliff, or it may have been jarred loose by the vibration of the men and the horses that had preceded them on their road. But it cut off the way before them, and since there was no bypath near they tried for hours to remove it, but the more rock they removed the more came tumbling down. At last they had to give it up and retrace their steps for more than a league and a half.

They had now lost several hours and the sun had set and the black night of the tropics was upon them. They groped this way and that, searching for some way back to the main road, but failing they made camp for the night in a tropical *barranca* and waited for the first streak of day to be up and on their way once more. They found some luscious oranges growing and a strange fruit that tasted like custard, and with this for their breakfast they went on and after awhile found a narrow road that was like a slender ribbon, but it lay

CHILE

As conceived in the Seventeenth Century by the map-makers Wil'em and Joan Blaeu of Amsterdam, authors of "Le théâtre du monde ou Nouvel Atlas."

in the desired direction according to the rays of the sun. But this new road was much longer than the highroad, and for the second time darkness came upon them before they had reached Los Reyes. So in the dark they continued to push on until in the gray light of dawn they beheld the gates of a city outlined before them in the mist.

And because they were a motley throng, with garments clinging to their bodies and with hair dripping damp on their temples, they approached the gates with hesitation. For they judged it to be the entrance to Los Reyes and they wanted to make a good appearance before their countryman, the Marquis.

Some of them said: "Let us wait until it is light. They may take us for invaders and open their guns upon us."

Another said: "Yes, let us wait until the morning dawns. Then we will enter and find the Licentiate de Espinosa, who must have reached here long before this. He will speak for us. He will know us for friends, though we look like a tribe of *flamencos.*"

But Ines Suarez protested: "We have been delayed too long already. There is no time to lose. The Marquis will know us for friends when we tell him we come from Extremadura."

Hardly had she uttered the words, when she heard the loud note of a trumpet and by the light of flickering torches saw the gates of the city flung open and soldiers streaming into the road armed and ready for the march.

Giving rein to her horse, she straightway went forward and approached the mounted officer who stood guard while his army formed outside the gate.

The officer reined in his horse and, calling to his

torchbearer to come nearer with the light, peered sharply into the face of the woman who had appeared before him suddenly out of the mist.

"I have no time for women," he said brusquely, seeing her bedraggled costume. "Tell your story to the sentry. We must march."

Then the old men came forward one by one from the gloom and as the light of the torches fell upon them, the officer made the sign of the cross. So did the torchbearer beside him, not knowing whether these creatures were alive or whether they were the ghosts of dead men come back from the tomb.

"We are no ghosts, but soldiers," said Alvaro, reading the officer's thoughts, "soldiers every one of us, for Doña de Suarez, here before you, is brave as any soldier among us. We came from Panama in the ship with Gaspar de Espinosa."

"Why, then, did you not come with the licentiate, who arrived two days ago?" the officer asked.

"Our horses fell and one was killed and our road was blocked by boulders. We had to retrace our steps and we lost our way in the dark. We are Extremeños and friends and we have come a long way to join Don Francisco Pizarro."

At the word "Extremeños," the officer raised his sword in salute.

"If you are Extremeños," he said, "then you are indeed soldiers and friends. And since you are mounted on horses you are more welcome than gold. Fall in behind us and march, for we are bound for the golden city of Cuzco whither Gaspar de Espinosa has already gone ahead of us. For yesterday the Marquis, while journeying peacefully to Cuzco, received tidings on

the way that Don Diego had quarreled with the brothers Pizarro and had imprisoned Hernando, whom he hates, and is seeking to seize the city of Cuzco and after that all Peru. So the Marquis turned back to defend the city of Los Reyes, sending the licentiate in his stead to see if he could reason with Almagro. But for fear Almagro has no reason, we are bound with our army for Cuzco. Therefore, if you have come to fight for the Marquis, fall in behind us and march, for we may have need of good soldiers who are Extremeños and friends."

Without further order the squad of old men, led by Ines de Suarez, fell in line at the rear and advanced along the road to Cuzco.

And what a journey it was! They who had lived in Extremadura, where village touched village with its elbows and where *posadas* dotted the road wherever shelter was needed, were wide-eyed with astonishment when the lemon light of morning came and they beheld the wildness, the vastness, the brooding melancholy of the land that lay everywhere about them: the giant snow-capped peaks that rose before them towering to the sky; the great gorges that lay beneath them filled with tropical growth.

Day after day they journeyed, following at first the course of the Apurimac as it rushed swirling down to the sea. Later the route lay up long flights of steps hewn from the face of the mountain, whose sides were terraced into fields for garden or growing grain, rising tier on tier to the very tip of the mountain. Sometimes the road descended into the tropical gorges where ripe fruits grew in abundance and the scent of violets was sweet. Again it rose to dizzy heights where the rocky

ledges cut the feet of the horses and where they crossed yawning chasms on teetering bridges made of osier and slung like hammocks from rock to rock across a rushing stream.

As the elevation grew higher and higher, the thin, rarified air taxed the hearts and lungs of men and beasts. The icy winds from the snow-clad mountains cut like knives through the heaviest garments that Ines Suarez had brought out from Spain. So the commander of the army—whose name was Captain Quiroga—ordered her outfitted like a soldier, with pantaloons short to the knees and long stockings of wool; with half-boots clamped in front, which were called *borceguies,* or buskins, and with heavy leggings covering the calves of her legs. With this she wore a belted coat and a coat of mail over her shoulders. Even had she been counted as an officer in the army, she could not have worn the casque which was the equipment of the officers and chiefs, for no casque formed for the head of a Spanish officer would have fitted over her masses of chestnut hair. So, clad in her soldier's garb and with head uncovered, Ines Suarez went day after day journeying with the soldiers.

By night they made camp, huddling close about the camp fires trying to keep warm. Ines Suarez and her squad of old men had their own fires and kept apart from the main column. Wearied by the day's march, the old men fell asleep while yet it was light.

Not so the soldiers of Don Francisco Pizarro, under the leadership of Captain Quiroga. They were a boisterous lot, who amused themselves at the end of the day tilting at reeds, a sport inherited from the Moors, which kept them in mind of gayer days in the home-

land. Sometimes they sang the rollicking song of the soldier: "Mistress, kill me a hen, for your mutton makes me sick."

At other times on the march, when the icy blasts from the mountains rushed down through the narrow defiles and came very near, in truth, carrying out the words of the song, they sang: "These little hairs from my head, mother; one by one the wind carries them away."

Ruthless and reckless were these soldiers, as sometimes, when encountering an Indian, they gave chase for the love of the sport, as they would have chased a fox or a rabbit, gibbeting him on their lances when they ran him to cover, or driving him to his death down a canyon. They never thought of the Indian as a human being. He was an infidel. He had no soul. Why should his life be spared?

Always they were on the lookout for gold, for spoils, and whenever they came upon some vestige of the conquered Incas' temple, they ransacked the place. If they found nothing of value, they hacked down the walls, as at Tambo, where they demolished walls that had been built of cement mixed with liquid gold.

"Down with the temples to the false gods," they cried. *"Cristo y Santiago!"* And with their battle-axes they hacked the walls to pieces. Then, remounting, they journeyed on, singing the songs of the soldier.

It was six hundred toilsome miles from the City of Kings to Cuzco, and the march occupied more than thirty days. Some of the soldiers, weakened by the breathless climb that carried them from sea level to an elevation of more than twelve thousand feet, fell

victim to *soroche,* the deadly mountain sickness, and gasping for air, they died.

Five of the old men who accompanied Ines Suarez perished on the way; more than that number of horses. But Alvaro, the cavalryman from Spain; Pepe, the herder of turkeys from Coria, and the seven others whose bodies were made of the steel of Spain continued their wearisome march, notwithstanding that some of them were forced to walk.

During the first few nights of the march, as the soldiers bivouacked, Ines Suarez would search by the light of the camp fires and say to herself: "Perhaps Pedro de Valdivia is here among these." But each time she would shake her head, and the sigh that issued from her lips was as much of relief as of disappointment.

For she told herself that the Pedro de Valdivia of her dreams was not of the timber of these devil-may-care fellows. He was a soldier and a conqueror with the ideals of a hero and the manners of a prince. He was not fighting for gold but for Christ and the King of Spain. She found herself wondering, too, if she would know him should she meet him on the open road, face to face. How many years was it? She asked herself that question. Would he have aged in that time? Would his raven locks have grown gray? Would his legs be less straight, less firm? Would he remember her whom he had seen but three times and she but a child of fourteen who was now a woman and a soldier? Had he forgotten her kiss in the moonlight, her lips that clung to his, her arms that had slipped through the iron bars of the window to wind themselves about

his shoulders, her fingers that had caressed his neck, his short-cropped hair?

Then she would fall asleep, with the camp fire flickering near-by and the Southern Cross glinting in the heavens, and she humming: "The others wore rich sombreros; Rodrigo wore casque of steel, and above his casque he wore a bonnet of colored plumes." And in the morning she would wake still humming: "The others wore perfumed gloves; Rodrigo wore gauntlet of mail. The others wore garments of silk; Rodrigo rode well armed." Then she would breakfast as a soldier and mounting her horse would continue on the march.

At last they reached the crest of the Andes, a bold, bleak, treeless plain; a melancholy, rocky land with stark hills and a fringe of snow-clad mountains. It was an hour past sunset and the evening mists were creeping up the mountainsides. The air was clear and cold. It was the beginning of April, and they had but a few leagues to go before they reached the city of Cuzco. But it was late and Captain Quiroga gave the order to make camp, though throughout the night a vigilant watch was kept by the guards and the soldiers slept on their arms, ready for what might befall.

A full moon flooded the melancholy mesa, softening the stark rocks by its pale silver light. How silent it was! The breathing of the horses, the snoring of the soldiers, the creak of leather boots or of armor as a restless sleeper turned, the footfall of the guards. Those were the only sounds. Not a night bird, not an insect was heard.

Ines Suarez, clad in her soldier's uniform and armor, wrapped a blanket of wool around her and slept on the

hard ground. Around her as guard while she slept, Alvaro, the cavalryman; Pepe, *Tio Pocitos,* and the seven remaining old men formed a cordon.

The light changed from silver to pale lemon, announcing that morning had come, and rising, they remembered that it was April 6, the feast day of St. Lazarus. So they said a special prayer and, as they were preparing to breakfast, a guard announced that a messenger on horseback was approaching, riding toward them at full speed across the mesa. As he drew near they saw that he carried the arms of the Pizarros.

He made a hurried announcement to Captain Quiroga. He had come from Hernando Pizarro, he said, the brother of the Marquis, who, having been liberated by Diego de Almagro, was now preparing for attack. Almagro was determined to seize Cuzco. The efforts of Gaspar de Espinosa to reason with him had failed. What was more, Espinosa had died, though no foul play was suspected.

"Nothing remains but to fight," announced the messenger. "Already the army of Almagro has taken its position at Las Salinas, scarcely a league distant, while Hernando Pizarro is preparing for direct attack." The messenger spoke rapidly. "Don Diego is old and too feeble to ride on horseback. But his army is under the command of Captain Rodrigo de Orgoñez, a good soldier and loyal, had he not cast his lot in bad company; while Almagro from his litter will direct the battle."

Captain Quiroga asked a few questions of the messenger, about the character of Almagro's position; the strength of the two armies.

"They are about equal in strength," replied the mes-

senger. "More than half of Almagro's force are horse, but Las Salinas is a marshy spot, dotted with pits and vats where the Indians make their salt from a spring. And being marshy, it is no fit ground for the free action of cavalry. Moreover, Almagro's infantry is deficient in firearms, using their pikes instead. They have only about six cannon, six small falconets."

"And what is Don Hernando's strength?" asked Quiroga.

"About the same—five hundred in all—a trifle weak in horse but his infantry under his brother Gonzalo is strong. Moreover, he has a trained army of arquebusiers with guns of improved construction, carrying double-headed shot—bullets linked together by iron chains. How many are you?" asked the messenger.

"Two hundred and fifty men and horse—and one woman," said Captain Quiroga, noting Ines Suarez' commanding form down toward the end of his column.

The messenger smiled, for he thought at first the captain was joking. Then he too caught sight of Ines with her high head surmounted by its masses of hair and the sunlight falling upon it. He smiled significantly at Captain Quiroga, who met the smile with cold, steely eyes; then wheeling his horse about, the messenger set off.

"Follow the route I shall take," he said, "but I warn you—protect the woman."

Captain Quiroga gave a quick command to his men, who, without waiting to finish breakfast, vaulted into their saddles and set off at a double quick pace following the route taken by the messenger.

The army of Don Francisco Pizarro, captained by Quiroga, their *jefe,* urged their horses to full speed.

Gone were their hunger and thirst. Gone the weariness of the night before. Even the beasts beneath them responded to the excitement of their riders, pricking their ears forward and straining at their reins.

Ines Suarez felt a clutch at her heart. Then a shadow passed over her brow.

"Christian is fighting Christian!" she said with her lips, but in her heart she said: "Perhaps here I shall find him. God grant that he is on the side of right." Then hearing the war cry before her: "The King and Pizarro!" she gave heel to her horse.

Pepe, the herder of turkeys, on foot ran for a second beside her.

"Señora," he said, "have a care. Soldiers in battle are cruel."

She turned her head and looked down into his eyes. They had the soft, tender look of a shepherd who is watching over a stray lamb.

"Thank you, Pepe, I will do my best," she said. "And do you have a care for yourself."

Once more came the cry: "The King and Pizarro!" Her horse leaped forward, leaving Pepe and the soldiers who were unmounted to follow as best they could.

It was but a short distance to Las Salinas and Ines Suarez had not gone far when through a cleft in the mountains she came out upon a rocky plain and saw the bright banners of the Pizarros fluttering in the clear morning air and the army of Hernando Pizarro drawn up ready for action along the right bank of a marshy stream, while on the opposite bank the army of Don Diego de Almagro with Rodrigo Orgoñez as leader prepared for direct attack.

But what was that bright blaze of color that animated

the arid brown of the rocks and covered the natural amphitheater that rose from the rocky plain? It was a flutter of red and green, of blue and purple and orange, as if the mountains had taken on life and decked themselves in gorgeous garments. One more look and she saw that the bright colors were the garments of Indians—a multitude of them—who, at the rumor that Christian was fighting Christian, had come out from Cuzco, taking their places on mountain, hill and rock, or standing silent on the plain, watching the spectacle.

But Ines Suarez had little time to take note of the Indians, for the two armies facing each other, both drawn up in the same formation—the infantry in the center, the horse on either flank—were impatiently awaiting attack.

Captain Quiroga, nearing the army of Hernando Pizarro, approached his chief and saluted. A large and powerful man was Don Hernando Pizarro, whose thick lips and full-fleshed, ruddy nose showed through the slit in his casque. The two officers exchanged words, then Quiroga was ordered to take his position with the cavalry on the left flank.

This done, Hernando Pizarro made a brief address to his army. Prancing back and forth on his horse, he discoursed after the manner of the Spaniard, touching on the personal injuries that he and his family had received from the hands of Diego de Almagro. He reminded his brothers' soldiers that Cuzco had once been in their grasp but had been snatched from them by Don Diego de Almagro. Then waving his hand toward Cuzco, which in the clear mountain air could be seen far off shining like a golden city, he said: "There lies the prize of the victor."

Suddenly his words were cut short. His eye had lighted on Ines Suarez.

"Who is that woman?" he asked of Captain Quiroga, his eyes blazing in the direction of Ines. "Who is she and what is she doing here among you, dressed in the uniform of a soldier?"

"She is a brave woman," said the captain, "and one who came out from Spain in the ship with the Bishop of Plasencia, and from Panama with Gaspar de Espinosa's ship. She has followed my army from Los Reyes and had been guardian angel to these old men——"

Hernando Pizarro cut him short and waving his hand toward the rear, he said with an imperious gesture: "Let her go back there."

Ines Suarez' eyes blazed: "For the love of God, *excellencia,*" she pleaded, "let me fight like a soldier! I am no weakling woman."

Hernando Pizarro attempted to silence her, but she would not be silenced: "Is it my fault if God has given me the form of a woman and the heart and soul of a soldier?"

"Silence!" roared Hernando Pizarro.

Then Alvaro, the old cavalryman, came forward and bending his knee before his chief, made bold to say:

"*Excellencia,* Doña de Suarez is a woman, but she is as brave as any soldier——" But again Pizarro roared:

"Silence! Let her stand back. This is a battle of men," he said. Then, noting Pepe and the others who were unmounted, he ordered in a voice of thunder: "Here, give your horse to this man. Retire to the rear."

Reluctantly Pepe, whom he had indicated, came for-

ward. With color mounting high to her cheek, Ines Suarez leaped from her horse and handed the bridle to Pepe, whose fingers trembled as he took it.

As Ines stepped backward, Captain Quiroga who stood near, whispered in her ear: "If any man falls, señora, take up his arms and advance."

Before she could answer the loud blast of a trumpet rent the air and the order: "Are you ready? Then forward! For Christ and Santiago!"

"The King and Pizarro!" shouted the army of Hernando Pizarro.

"The King and Almagro!' shouted the army on the opposite bank.

Ines Suarez with head flung high but with sinking heart went to the rear of the army, and climbing to a rock, surveyed the scene of battle. She saw the two armies charge each other. She saw the riders rise in their stirrups and face to face, spear against spear advance. She saw the infantry surge forward to a vantage point on firmer ground and open fire on the enemy. She saw the backs of Hernando Pizarro's men, clad in their coats of mail. Only a row of backs with their guns leveled at the enemy on the opposite shore.

Her eyes roved from one back to another along the column of arquebusiers, each in his coat of mail, as if cut from one mold.

"How should I know him? . . . she asked herself, and as the gunfire deafened her ears she prayed: *"María Santissima,* if he be here, grant that he fight for the right."

She saw the trained army of arquebusiers with their guns of improved construction fire upon the enemy

advancing from the opposite shore. She saw one who appeared to be their leader, his shoulders broad and well-proportioned, his legs straight and firm and lithe. She saw him move hither and thither, directing the gunfire. But his coat of mail was like any other. A casque covered his head.

"Holy Virgin," she murmured. "How should I know? How should I know? Backs! Backs! Only backs!"

She saw the army of Diego de Almagro mowed down by the chain shot from the arquebuses of Hernando Pizarro; saw the spearmen scattered like leaves in a high wind.

"Cristo y Santiago! Santiago y España! El Rey y Pizarro!"

She saw Hernando Pizarro taking advantage of the fire from his own guns, form his two squadrons of horse into one column and drive forward reaching firm ground against the army of Almagro on the opposite shore.

She saw Orgoñez, the commander of Almagro's army, following the example of Pizarro, form his two squadrons into one and advance at full gallop.

She saw the two armies meet, face to face, saw the riders high in their stirrups running one another through with their lances.

She saw Orgoñez, the leader, overthrow one of Pizarro's men with his lance, and run another through the thigh while the cry of victory issued from his lips; saw him attack a third and then the guns of Pizarro's army boomed out and Orgoñez went down with his horse. She saw Orgoñez extricate himself from his

stirrups as the cavalry of Pizarro surrounded him. In another instant Orgoñez was run through by a sword, his head was struck off, mounted on a pike, and carried aloft as a banner, with the eyes staring wide.

She heard a wild yell of triumph which was from neither Pizarro's nor from Almagro's men. It came from the Indians on the hills—a wild barbaric cry of vengeance, of rejoicing that a Christian had fallen.

Another cry—this time from Almagro's army. One of Pizarro's horsemen had been run through with a lance. He toppled from his saddle, his head hung down, his foot caught fast in one stirrup.

The horse, frightened by the limp body of its rider, reared on its haunches, turned and dashed to the rear.

Ines, seeing, remembered the words of Captain Quiroga: "If any man falls, señora, take up his arms and advance."

She who had amused herself in her childhood leaping on the backs of unbroken colts, now threw herself straight into the path of the frightened horse. Grasping the reins in one firm hand, with the other she released the foot of the dead rider from its stirrup, letting him sink to the ground. As he fell he lay face upward. It was Alvaro, who had been cavalryman in Spain. The agony of death was in his eyes.

With the cry of *"Cierra España!"* on her lips, Ines Suarez gave heel to her horse. Wrenching the mace from its hook on her saddle, she turned her steed and charged straight into the ranks of the enemy.

The fight had lasted more than an hour. Fortune had turned against Almagro. His infantry, cut to pieces by the fire of Pizarro's guns, had taken refuge

behind one of the stone walls with which the country was outlined. But his horsemen continued to charge.

Ines heard the clang of steel, the splintering of wood, the shouts, the moans. She saw the spear points of the enemy advancing in a threatening row. Then she went mad with rage. Her mace was in her hand, a formidable weapon with a wooden handle ending in a ball of steel covered with projecting spikes.

With this weapon she charged. To left, to right, she brandished her club of steel with its fiercely projecting spikes. She dashed aside the spears that threatened her. Fending, striking, shouting like a paladin, she fought.

There was a moment of confusion. She saw one of Almagro's men direct his spear at the thigh of one of her companions in arms. Before his spear could strike, her mace was raised and crashed down on the enemy. The lance of the antagonist was splintered. He fell unhorsed to the field. As she turned to the companion she had saved she saw with a shock of horror the thick lips and the fleshy nose of Hernando Pizarro showing through the slit in his casque. It was her chief she had saved; he who had ordered her from his army. But before she could look again he had disappeared from her sight.

For an hour longer the battle continued. Then disorder ran through the ranks of Almagro's men. They fled and with them fled their leader, who from his litter on a distant hill had seen the defeat of his army. Convinced, then, that all was lost, he mounted his mule and fled—but he fled in the direction of Cuzco. With him fled his army, while after him in hot pursuit dashed the army of Hernando Pizarro, pursued and pursuers

alike rushing like madmen to Cuzco, the golden prize of the victors.

Behind them on the plains of Las Salinas lay their dead and their wounded, friends and enemies alike, united in the end as they had been in the beginning.

For a moment the battlefield lay still—deserted by all save the dead and wounded. But only for a moment. Suddenly the mountains and hills came to life. Like vultures that had been hovering over their prey, the Indians swarmed down from the heights. They took possession of the battlefield. They rifled the bodies of the dead. They despoiled the bodies of the wounded. This was the vengeance they had awaited. They whose spirits were broken, whose leaders were slain, still could claim vengeance as their own.

Ines Suarez, riding forward to Cuzco with the army of Hernando Pizarro hotly pursuing their enemy, felt a sharp pain in her breast. For a moment she drooped forward to her horse's neck, then slumped from her saddle to the ground. Her horse stepped aside to avoid her. So did the horses of the soldiers who followed immediately behind. Blood streamed from a wound in her side.

It seemed that she lay there for eternity. She heard the pounding of horses' hoofs in her ears. She heard the tramp of the feet of infantry. She heard the wild yells of the Indians. Then faintly and as if afar off, she heard the voices of Spain coming nearer and nearer.

Slowly her eyelids fluttered open. She saw the luster of burnished casques and the uniforms of officers bending over her.

"Love of God," she heard one say. "It is *Flamencita* with the eyes of absinthe." And opening her eyes for a moment she saw brown eyes opened wide to the temples regarding her with amazement and awe. Then once more the world faded out.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I HAVE A WISH

THE world came drifting back to Ines Suarez the following morning. She awoke to find herself lying on a couch in a high-ceilinged room. The room was without windows, but through the open doorway she looked out upon a court and beyond the court to a high wall of massive quarried stones polished smooth as glass.

The air of the room was cold—clear and crisp and cold—the thin air of high altitudes. Bright sunlight flooded the court outside. A shaft of sunlight slanted in at the door but did not penetrate far nor warm the cold interior.

A robe of soft white fur covered Ines as she lay upon the couch. She drew it closer about her body. It was the fur of the white alpaca. Her fingers caressed its silky softness. Beneath her on the couch was another fur, light fawn with patches of white. It was the skin of the *vicuña,* the antelope of the Andes.

How long it had been since she had felt a couch beneath her body. She lay for a few moments luxuriously resting, watching the shaft of sunlight slanting across the floor, trying to assemble her thoughts, to realize where she was, what had brought her here.

She noted that the floor of the room was of stone strewn with skins of fur—with hides of leather. She

noted that the walls also were of stone and that here and there, on walls, on ceiling were flecks of brightness as if sunlight filtered through chinks. Yet they were not chinks for the walls were solid and strong.

Slowly the events of the previous day began to come back to her—at first in a jumble of unrelated things remembered by the senses. The ring of horses' hoofs over rocky cliffs. Bright color on the mountains; green and crimson and blue tinting the granite slopes. The smell of human blood. The wild yells of battle echoing against the hills.

Gradually it all began to come back. Two armies drawn up in battle array. Hernando Pizarro's voice of thunder ordering her from his ranks. The charge! The shouts! The fire from the guns of the arquebusiers! Men and horses falling. A decapitated head mounted, bleeding, on a pike. Alvaro's kind eyes looking up from the ground at her feet—rolling in the agony of death. Then, the feel of the horse beneath her. The weight of the mace in her hand. The impact of its spikes. Tumult—and then—quiet, and the sound of voices speaking low; the gleam of burnished casques above her; grave eyes looking into hers. Was it a dream or had Pedro de Valdivia been near?

"Santa María!" exclaimed Ines, and struggled from the couch to her feet.

Limply she sank back once more. Her head throbbed as if a vise of steel held it. Her heart beat wildly. Her breath came in short, agonizing gasps. A sharp stabbing was in her side.

She heard a sound in the room, and from a shadowy corner a shadowy form emerged. It was the figure of a woman—a native woman no longer young. She was

garbed in a straight bright garment that hung from shoulder to ankle. Her hair was in long black braids. Her face, her hands, her slender bare feet were of coppery brown. She drew near to Ines. In her eyes was a look of melancholy as if the sorrows of all the ages were mirrored there.

She spoke a few words in a tongue that Ines could not understand. Then, pattering away as old Luz might have pattered, she returned with a silver bowl in her hands—a steaming bowl—which she offered to Ines. The bowl, had Ines known it, contained a broth made from the brains of llamas. She did not know it, however, and she was hungry. She sipped a little of the broth and made a second effort to rise.

The old woman shook her head and pressed her side with her hand. Ines remembered the wound with its sharp stabbing. Again the melancholy eyes of the woman brooded over her.

"It is nothing," said Ines. "I am a soldier." And she struggled to her feet again. The walls of the room swayed. The floor sank away beneath her. She seemed to be floating in mid-air. She knew the effect of high altitudes on heart and lungs. So she sat down on the edge of the couch and waited for the vertigo to pass. Sitting there she looked about the room once more. Her eyes by now had become accustomed to the shadows. She noted again the flecks of brightness on the wall and realized their meaning. They were fragments of gold, of silver, left dangling where bars of precious metal had been torn away, a stray bit here, a jagged edge there, with the rough stone showing beneath, or a dab of plaster applied to fill the gap.

The native woman squatted on the floor beside the couch, following Ines' eyes with her own. Slowly her head moved from side to side, deprecatorily, then drooped sadly until her chin rested on her chest. From far, far away came the melancholy wail of reed pipes; the *triste* music of the Incas. For a moment it pierced the air, then died away in a long note of sadness. The wail of a conquered people!

The ache in Ines' head gradually grew less. Her breathing became more measured. Her heart and lungs, adjusting themselves to the thin air, began to function more normally. She noted a steel breastplate and boots lying on the floor beside her couch. They were hers. She had worn them yesterday. She was attired still in pantaloons. Her soldier's coat was unbuttoned. She removed it and the blouse beneath and examined the wound in her side. It was bandaged crudely after the method of the day; some rags held in place by thongs of leather. Yet withal it was a skillful bandage. The wound was deep, a spear-point had entered beneath her cuirass. There was a jagged wound below her right breast. But a healthy blood-clot had formed. Youth and Spanish vigor had triumphed.

Ines adjusted her blouse, buttoned on her coat once more and, walking slowly to the door of her room, looked out into the court. It was empty. A rectangle of stone buildings formed three sides. The high stone wall shut them in like a fortress.

She strolled into the courtyard and examined the wall. The stones were massive, some of them higher than her head. Many of them had numerous angles, yet all were fitted together, stone on stone, angle to

angle, without the aid of cement yet so perfectly, so tightly that a knife blade could not have been inserted between them.

Beyond the stone wall that imprisoned her Ines could see the towers of an edifice more stately than the cathedral of Plasencia, rising high into the air. Like the walls and ceiling of her room, bits of gold clung to the towers and from the broad frieze that edged the temple. Fragments of gold dripped from the eaves, like golden tears from the eyes of the Children of the Sun. Here and there deeply imbedded in the stone work was an ornament, an ear of golden corn enclosed in a husk of silver and ornamented with a jeweled tassel, so deeply imbedded that it had resisted even the axe of the Spaniard.

Standing in the courtyard surveying the temple, Ines could hear the ring of rollicking voices. "Mistress, kill me a hen, for your mutton makes me sick." It was the song of the Spanish soldiers. She felt comforted by the sound. The soldiers were near.

For the temple whose towers appeared above the wall where Ines was standing, was the Temple of the Sun. That which had once been the pride of the Incas, was now a *cuartel* of the soldiers. The stone buildings surrounding the courtyard where Ines had slept were the Temples of the Vestals, the Virgins of the Sun. Here under the care of the *mamaconas,* old women who grew gray within the walls, the native maidens of royal blood had been cloistered until the Inca had chosen them for bride and taken them to his royal seraglio. But that was before the Spaniard came.

Ines looked all about her. The Virgins of the Sun

were not to be seen. Yet she knew the houses about the courtyard were occupied. She remembered the rumors she had heard in Panama, of how Don Francisco Pizarro had seized the daughter of the Inca Atahualpa and taken the princess to his bed. And, listening, she heard the wail of infants; the low crooning voices of mothers singing in an unknown tongue, and she knew that the Virgins of the Sun were virgins no longer. The Spaniard had taken them for his own, and having taken them, had immured them once more in their fortress even as the Moors in his fathers' day had taken and immured the women of Spain.

Again came the ring of Spanish voices, singing their soldier songs. *"Titiri! Titriri! Titina! Somos la jacarandina!"* they sang. A gang of ruffians, indeed!

A wave of homesickness surged over Ines Suarez. A wave of hunger for home, for Spain, for Plasencia, the beautiful (thanks be to God and to man), for the sight of old Luz pattering softly to mass, old Pancho dreaming in the sun, waiting until God should call his name, for the sweet fragrance of thyme and mimosa, for nightingales singing in the wild olive trees. How far, how far away they seemed. The voices of the soldiers were near. *"Titira! Titira! Titina! Somos la jacarandina!"*

Ines listened for the voices of her soldier companions. She remembered, with sadness, about Alvaro. She wondered about the kind Captain Quiroga, who had led his army and her with them from Los Reyes. She wondered about the old men. How had they fared in the battle—old Pepe—Tio Pocitos—and the others. She approached the gate in the wall. She must know

the fate of those old men whose souls were made of the steel of Spain, but whose bodies were fragile.

The gate was barred from without and locked. The massive lock was of silver. Ines shrugged her shoulders and looked about further. A silver fountain in the center of the courtyard sent a rainbow spray of water into the clear sunlight. Vases of silver stood about. A bench of pure silver stood near the fountain. These the Spaniard had kept for his own. Ines sat down upon the silver bench and watched the rainbow fountain play.

She lifted her eyes again to the Temple of the Sun. The jewel in the tassel of corn that had withstood the axes of the greedy flashed in the morning sunlight. A cryptic smile passed across Ines' face. From far, far away, the romance of Rosaflorida came homing back to memory. Rosaflorida who dwelt in a castle with foundations of gold and battlements of silver and merlons set with a sapphire that glowed brighter at night than the sun at noonday. Rosaflorida, who was sought by gallants far and wide, desired of seven counts, besought by three dukes of Lombardy, yet who disdained them all and sent for Montesinos, ordering him to come to her in the flowery season of Easter. "Tell him," ordered Rosaflorida, "that my body is the most beautiful in all Spain, that it is his for the asking; but if he desires more I will give him seven castles."

Plaintively the words of the romance returned. Ines hummed softly:

"Y si de mi mas quisiere,
Yo mucho más le daría.
Darle he siete castillos,
Los mejores que hay en——"

The humming ceased abruptly. Ines heard the clink of a silver key grating against a silver lock, the ring of a silver bar dropping in a silver socket. Through the door in the wall a Spanish soldier entered, an officer high in rank.

With a start Ines recognized the thick lips, the full-fleshed ruddy nose, the bulky form of Don Hernando Pizarro.

Her shoulders grew tense. She lifted her head high. Her right hand sought her belt. But Don Hernando's smile, though imperious, told her she need have no fear, that his call was salutary.

Approaching her, he inclined his knee, stiffly. "I trust all is well with you," he said. His tone was haughty. His gesture was the gesture of a chief saluting his subject.

She replied that by God's will she was alive and well, and, after the manner of Spain, inquired after his own health.

He replied briefly, adding: "It seems that it is to you I owe my life. Yesterday you disobeyed my order. For that you should be punished, yet since it seems that had you not interfered with your mace that dastard's spear had run me through, you are pardoned. Thanks to you and the dear God, I am alive. I wish to reward you. If you have a wish, make it known. If it is in reason it will be granted." Again he inclined his knee, stiffly.

Ines hesitated for a moment. Gratitude was not what she might have expected of one who entered through the barred gate and found her alone in the courtyard of the Virgins.

"I wish only to be free," she told him. "To return

to the army. To fight as a soldier fights. That is my wish."

"To be free is your right, señora," said Don Hernando Pizarro. "In good time that wish will be granted. But know you that there are thirteen hundred soldiers quartered within the walls of Cuzco, that though Diego de Almagro—the swine from Malagón—is a prisoner in his dungeon, his followers are at liberty. We must keep our women safe." There was a leer in his eye as he said it, but Ines ignored it. For a moment there was silence between them, then Don Hernando turned on his heel to go.

She stopped him. "How long am I to be kept prisoner here?" she asked, her eyes flashing.

"Only so long as good judgment dictates," he said. "My brother, the Marquis, Don Francisco, is now on his way hither from Los Reyes. When he arrives he will determine the fate of Almagro. Then order will be restored among Almagro's men. Until that time, have patience. You are no prisoner. You are a woman protected."

"Have I shown that I need the protection of men?" asked Ines, her head held high.

He made no reply. She asked about her companions. "Tell me," she urged. "Did Captain Quiroga come safely through the battle? And the old men, my companions?" She mentioned their names, one by one. Señor Ignacio Garcia; old Pepe (whom they had nicknamed El Pavo—the turkey—because of his calling and his strut); Tio Pocitos, the blacksmith. She gave the name of each.

Don Hernando was not sure. Captain Quiroga?

Yes. He was safe and sound. As for the others—he would make inquiry and send her word.

"May I not go to them?" she asked. He shook his head. "Then send me word, at once, I pray you," she pleaded. "If they are wounded, or need me, let me be sent for—for the love of God."

"Of a certainty!" Don Hernando assured her, but—before he departed was there not something—some reward—some request? He wanted, naturally, to show some appreciation for the saving of his life.

Ines was not thinking of reward. She was thinking of the field of battle, wondering if she had been dreaming or were those the eyes of Pedro de Valdivia, was that his voice, as she lay wounded after the battle of Las Salinas. She lifted her eyes dreamily. The golden ear of corn sparkled in the tower above her head. "Tell him to come to me in the flowery season of Easter," the words of the romance ran through her brain.

"Señor!" she said aloud as Don Hernando Pizarro was departing. "I have a wish." She said it with no evasion. "You have—or have you—in your army—a soldier—an officer by name Pedro de Valdivia? If he is alive and well I would speak with him. I knew him once—in Spain. I am from Plasencia, in Extremadura, and he from Castuera de la Serena. My name is Ines Suarez. Doña Ines de Suarez, if you will, for I am a widow. Tell him I asked for him. Tell him to come to me. It is my wish."

"And that is your request?" Don Hernando asked. "Señora, you have saved my life. I owe you much. There is gold in Peru and jewels. There are lands and *repartimientos* of Indians. Claim your reward."

"I have but one wish, one request," she said. "I would speak with Don Pedro de Valdivia."

Hernando Pizarro bowed himself out, smiling a significant smile.

Ines heard the gate close. She ran to the fountain. She scrutinized her image. She arranged her hair. She adjusted her soldier's garb. Then she sat down and waited, her heart beating wildly.

She did not have long to wait, although to her it seemed an eternity. Soon the gate swung back and Pedro de Valdivia entered. He was clad in full armor. His plumed casque was in his hand. She saw him as she had seen him first silhouetted in the cathedral door at Plasencia. He was somewhat older now than when she had last seen him, somewhat thinner, yet with the same lithe limbs, the same stride of a conqueror, the same manner of a hero. The same close-cropped raven locks waved away from forehead and temples without a tinge of gray. The white ruff about his neck accentuated his soldier tan.

His eyes were welcoming. His red lips parted in a smile.

Ines stood beside the fountain, her arms outstretched.

"Flamencita!" he exclaimed. "Little gipsy with the absinthe eyes!" He came toward her and grasping her by the shoulders held her off, his wide eyes devouring her. But he did not take her in his arms, though she waited. Instead he dropped to one knee on the floor of the courtyard and taking both her hands in his, he kissed them. His lips lingered on each finger, clung to her sensitive palms, sending a wave of passion through her. Then rising, he stood before her. But

still he did not kiss her lips, though she offered them, offered far more.

"I am here," she said, for want of something better to say. Then she waited.

"True! True!" he nodded. "You are here." He seemed perplexed by a difficult problem. "I found you lying wounded on the battlefield, or rather my *amigo* found you, Gerónimo de Alderete. He was the first to see you, though it was I who brought you here in my arms. It was I who dressed your wound, for there was no one else to do it except the *yanacona* (the native woman) who is here with you." His eyes deepened as he spoke of dressing her wound, remembering her pale gold body, the jagged wound below her naked breast.

"You?" she asked, feeling strangely inert, then steeling herself, added: "But now I am all right. My wound is healing!"

Again he took her by the shoulders. *"Por Dios!"* he exclaimed. "What strength! What a woman! But tell me—for the love of God—what are you doing here? You, a Spanish woman. This is no place for you, here among these soldiers."

The silver bench was near. She dropped down upon it.

"Why not?" she asked.

"Why have you come?" he countered. He stood above her, scrutinizing her with his eyes, yet withholding his hands, his lips.

"I came to serve my King," she said.

"But how? How? With these men, these soldiers?"

She tried to explain her coming, tried to answer for her presence with the men. She knew he must be dis-

approving else he would not withhold his arms. Breathlessly she told him all, or nearly all that had happened since the day she had seen him with the conquerors at Navalmoral. She told him of the long illness of her aunt, of the old lady's death, of the squadron the Bishop of Plasencia had outfitted, of *La Libertad*. Without evasion she told him of Agustin. It was the only way to make things clear. She dwelt briefly on her marriage, on Agustin's illness and death. Then told the rest of the story—Panama, the illness of the bishop; the squad of old men to whom she had been guardian angel; the *Esperanza*.

She spoke with the directness of a soldier, and like a soldier he heard her. The look of the lover was in his eyes. The sensual warmth was on his lips. But his arms were held fast against his sides, the military attitude of the soldier.

When she had finished, he began to talk, and his words were sharper than the stab of the cold steel had been in Ines' quivering flesh.

"Señora," he said. "I too have married. I have a wife in Spain. Her name is María Ortiz de Gaete—now María Ortiz de Valdivia."

Ines' eyes flashed fire.

"You were married when we met!"

He shook his head.

"Then—you married—her—after you knew me."

"You were a child," he said. "And I was a soldier. I had seen you but once. How could I know that I—that you . . ." he paused. "The marriage had been long arranged between my family and hers. You know the ways of Spain."

"You—you—love her?" asked Ines.

"She is a good woman," he said. "She is my wife."

"That was not my question," said Ines. "I asked you if you loved her."

"She is a good woman," he said, and then added, "Ah, señora, Spain is far, far away and this is a melancholy land." He waited hopefully for her answer.

The whimper of an infant sounded in one of the houses of the Virgins. Ines clicked her heels together and held out her hand in gesture of farewell.

Dropping to his knees he took it, took both her hands in his and kissed them, kissing again and again her pale gold fingers. His hot lips clung to her sensitive palms. A wave of passion surged over them both—in the lonely land of Peru.

It was Ines who first gained her composure.

"Adios!" she said. Her voice was scarcely more than a whisper. *"Adios!* Pedro de Valdivia. Go you with God. I, too, am a soldier."

He hesitated a moment, but the glints in her eyes were steel.

"With God!" he said, bowing low—and bowing low he left her.

CHAPTER TWELVE
I COME AS A WOMAN, BUT I FEAR NOTHING

IN THE first few days that followed her meeting with Pedro de Valdivia, Ines Suarez did not leave the Temple of the Virgins. As Hernando Pizarro had said, she was not a prisoner, she was a woman protected. There were thirteen hundred Spanish soldiers assembled in the capital of the Incas and disorder reigned.

Then came the execution of Don Diego de Almagro. Without awaiting the arrival of the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro, who was on his way from Los Reyes, a process was prepared against his rival. Four thousand folio pages of accusations were offered in evidence at the trial. His enemies denounced him. His companions, hoping thereby to gain favor with the Pizarros, turned against him. He was accused of treason, of plotting against the Marquis, of inciting civil war and a thousand other trumped-up crimes. Don Diego admitted nothing. He was convicted, nevertheless; confessed his sins to Father Valverde. In accordance with his sentence he was given the garrote in his dungeon, strangled, after the manner of the day, by an iron collar squeezed tighter and tighter with an iron screw until life was extinct. His body was carried to the public plaza. There his head was severed, after which the victim was buried in the Church of Our

Lady of Mercy. He who had been the idol of his soldiers, the friend and companion of Francisco Pizarro in their young days of discovery and conquest, he whose gold had turned to dross.

The day following the execution an elderly officer, a veteran with iron-gray hair and the manner of a courtier, appeared before the door of Ines Suarez in the Temple of the Virgins and said that the old men, her former companions, had sent for her—their guardian angel.

"There are but four of them," said the officer. "Alvaro and three of the others perished on the battlefield. Two have since died of their wounds."

"Four!" said Ines. "Only four. Once there were seventy of them." Her eyes grew misty. Her red lips trembled for a moment. "They were so brave, so kind, their bodies were old but their hearts were so young."

She turned to accompany the officer. He, himself, was no longer young, though he had the steel of the soldier in his muscles. His shoulders were straight and slim, but his gray hair and beard and the deep lines that cut into his cheeks and rayed out from the corners of his eyes, told that he had lived long and vigorously.

There was something familiar about his face—about his bearing. Ines had the feeling she had known him before. She asked him about it. "Señor," she said, "we have met somewhere. I seem to have seen you before."

"It was after the battle of Las Salinas," he said. "It was I who found you lying on the battlefield."

"Ah—I know," there was a quick catch in her voice. "But long, long before that I saw you. You are Don

Gerónimo de Alderete. You are Don Pedro de Valdivia's friend. It was in Spain I saw you. You had returned from Italy. You stopped in Plasencia. It was the Feast Day of Our Lady. I saw you at the door of the cathedral and Don Pedro was with you."

Her eyes were shining, her voice was ringing. There was a sudden catch in her voice. A wave of homesickness swept over her. A longing for Spain possessed her. But swiftly as it came, it passed.

Gerónimo de Alderete nodded and smiled.

"Plasencia?" he asked. "The Feast Day of Our Lady? Ah, yes, I remember. We were returning from Pavia. Ah, we have fought many a battle together, Don Pedro and I. Though he is many years my junior, we have been companions always, in Germany, in Italy, in Venezuela, here . . ." His hand swept out as if to encompass all Peru. Then he added: "*Muy soldado* is Don Pedro. The best soldier in all Peru, and there is none braver. Well does the Marquis know it. He has said often that the little finger of Pedro de Valdivia is worth more than four Pizarros or a hundred Don Diego de Almagros—God rest his soul."

Ines crossed herself. They had reached the Place of Gold, as the Temple of the Incas was called. They passed through a massive gate set in a massive wall. The central building, which dominated the others, was the Temple of the Sun. It was the one Ines had noted from the courtyard of the Virgins. Fragments of gold dripped from its towers. To the right was the Temple of the Moon. Once its massive walls had glowed with silver bars, reflecting the moon's pale silver light. It, too, had been stripped of its treasure. To the left were

other buildings: the Chapel of the Lightning, the Chapel of the Thunder. Grouped around the court were other smaller buildings. The Chapel of the Rainbow was at the far end. It was there the old men were quartered.

Ines smiled at finding her companions in the Chapel of the Rainbow, they who had followed it thousands of miles in search of their pot of gold. Four of them only remained, four brave adventurers filled with the joy of life and the zest for danger.

They greeted her effusively, though their condition was sad. Señor Ignacio Garcia had lost one eye. Papa Juan's right hand was bandaged. He had lost two fingers and a thumb. One of old Pepe's legs was missing, severed above the knee. It had been cut through by a saber. One of his companions had amputated it while the others sat upon him to calm his nerves. No longer would his sobriquet apply. No longer could he strut like a turkey. Uncle Pocitos, the blacksmith, was the only one of the four who escaped serious injury, but his face showed the fatigue of age.

They did not talk of themselves or their injuries, however. They spoke of the six who were gone. They crossed themselves and murmured: "God rest their souls. They loved danger and went out as they had lived—as a soldier should always go out, fighting furiously. Why not?"

They were concerned about the state of Ines' health, though they had small need for concern when they saw her for she was the embodiment of life. Her head, with its red-gold aureole, was held gallantly high. Her pale gold cheeks glowed with that healthy pallor of the Spaniards. Her seriously passionate eyes sparkled

with glints of green. Standing before them in her soldier garb, she brought youth and health to these old men.

"Muy soldado!" they said, speaking of Doña Ines and addressing Gerónimo de Alderete. *"Muy soldado mujer!"* they repeated. (Very much the woman soldier.) Then turning to Ines, they said:

"Well—soon we will be marching again, and you marching with us. Is it not so, señora?"

Old Pepe picked up his crutches and hobbled about the room as indifferent to the loss of his leg as if it were an everyday occurrence.

"Marching?" said Ines, puzzled. "Why should we march? Are we not in Peru? Why should we march away?"

Ignacio Garcia, looking like a corsair with his bandaged eye, answered her question. "Of course we are in Peru," he said, "but so are thirteen hundred other soldiers. Most of them were here long before us, and jealous enough of what they have found. Just let us try to take a share of their fortune. See how long we remain in Peru!"

"It is to a new land we go," said Tio Pocitos. "Have you not heard? King Carlos has sent orders to the Marquis to explore and conquer all the territory southward to the Straits. Already the Marquis is on his way from Los Reyes to organize an expedition and name a leader. He is to name an Extremeño, too—Pedro de Valdivia—so they say, now *Maestre de campo* of the Marquis' army."

Ines Suarez caught her breath.

"We will leave Peru to those who want it!" went on old Pepe. "Our chance lies in the new land. We can

be rulers there. Plenty of territory for us all! Gold, too! And silver! And hundreds of Indians for our slaves. I can march with the best soldier that ever shouldered a pike, even if I have but one leg."

"I can see silver and gold with my one good eye!" exclaimed Ignacio Garcia.

"One does not need two hands for picking up a fortune!" said Papa Juan.

So the old men babbled and, after an hour, Ines prepared to depart.

"You will go marching with us, eh, señora?" they asked.

Ines smiled. "That will be as God wills," she said and left them—all protesting loudly that without her they would not march one step.

Don Gerónimo accompanied her back to the Temple of the Virgins.

"Those old men spoke the truth," he said. "If a leader is named to conquer more land to the south, it will be Don Pedro de Valdivia," he said. "The Marquis knows that it takes more than military genius to conquer the Indians of that land, and Don Pedro is not only a brave soldier, he is a good farmer as well, and knows how to feed an army during long periods of siege."

Ines nodded. "Was that why Almagro failed?" she asked. "Because he was not a good farmer?"

Gerónimo de Alderete shrugged his shoulders: "Almagro never got anywhere in his life," he said, without the aid of Francisco Pizarro. I doubt me if he will even get to hell, but will be sitting comfortably on the edge of purgatory, until the Marquis gives him another push."

Ines was thoughtful. "But Don Pedro will not find it so easy to raise an army," she said, "after the bad name given to Chile by Almagro's soldiers who came back."

"Not so easy," Don Gerónimo agreed, "though Pedro de Valdivia has hosts of friends. But except for such reckless devils as your four old companions, there are few willing to risk the cold, the desert, the warlike Indians of that land."

"How about you, señor?" she asked.

Don Gerónimo clicked his heels. "Don Pedro is my friend, my *jefe*. I will march with him to the gates of hell." He turned to Ines and asked: "And what about you, señora?"

Ines' heart leaped to her throat. "I?" she asked in surprise. "I? Ah, señor. That will be as God wills."

They had reached the gates of the Virgins' Temple. Ines bade Don Gerónimo *adios* and left him.

She did not see him again for more than a week, nor did she see Pedro de Valdivia until the day when Don Francisco Pizarro, the Marquis, arrived in triumph from Los Reyes.

The Marquis had received a great shock—or so it was whispered in Cuzco—when he learned on his journey from Los Reyes of the hasty trial and execution of Don Diego Almagro, his rival, his one-time friend. Yet he must have soon recovered from the shock, for there was nothing of mourning in the manner of his entry into Cuzco, amid fanfare of trumpets riding at the head of his calvacade.

He was dressed in the rich garment of fur that Cortés, his countryman, had sent him from Mexico, and his entrance was the entrance of the victor.

A glittering pageant of soldiery awaited him in the Plaza of Cuzco. Though it was winter and an icy wind blew down from the mountains, yet—the region being in the tropics—the sun was warm and forget-me-nots blossomed between the boulders with which the plaza was paved—yes, forget-me-nots, beneath the feet of the Christian, in the city the infidel had built.

Every soldier was in full regalia, the army drawn up in review around the three sides of the plaza, forming a hollow square into which the Marquis should ride. Casques and breastplates gleamed. Silken pennons fluttered as lances were held at salute. The horses of the cavalry were groomed until their coats shone like satin. The guns of the arquebusiers were polished. Everywhere the banners of the Pizarros floated brightly in the clear air.

At noonday Francisco Pizarro came riding on his coal-black horse. He entered the plaza from the east, followed by his escort of horsemen, his footguard following after them. He pranced into the hollow square around which his army was ranged and, waving his sword in greeting, he smiled an amiable smile.

Ines Suarez, dressed as a soldier, stood toward the end of the column on the right-hand side. Near her stood Gerónimo de Alderete, and not far away were her four aged friends.

Ines studied the face of the Marquis as she had studied it years before when she saw him at Navalmoral. Then she moved her head slowly from side to side, saying to herself.

"He is old," she said. "A conqueror should have more fire in his eye," and she glanced about her at his army.

She let her eye rest now on this one, now on that. There—at her right hand was Captain Quiroga, who had led the army from Los Reyes, who had seen that she and her old men companions were given every possible care. He was young—yes—and a good soldier. Gerónimo de Alderete? He, too, was old. Hernando Pizarro? Older than the Marquis, his brother.

At last her eyes found that which they sought. She gripped her hands. Her heart pounded. Pedro de Valdivia, in the center of the army, stood at the head of the infantry. He was afoot and dressed in his garb of *arcabuzero*. His gunners stood behind him. In the eyes of Ines Suarez he stood out from the other soldiers as a bright planet stands out among the stars.

He saw her glance, and though he held his head at attention his lips parted in a smile. His eyes, widening at the temples, smiled, too.

In spite of her will Ines returned his smile just as the note of a trumpet rent the air.

"Silence!" said a herald. "The Marquis will speak."

Don Francisco Pizarro, standing in his stirrups, addressed his army. In words that marked him, not as a man of letters, but as one with military genius, he thanked his soldiers for their valor, their bravery, the victory they had won. Cuzco was theirs. All Peru was now, thanks to God and Santiago and the help of his army, restored to peace and quiet. It was restored to him, their Marquis, who represented the King of Spain in the new world as the King of Spain represented Christ upon earth. Those who had been loyal would receive their reward. Each and every soldier in the army should have a share in the victory. The

estates of the leaders of the rebellion would be confiscated—divided up among the faithful. And—if they desired more—more was to be had. Francisco Pizarro paused in his speech, then, waving his hand to the south, he added: "For those who are not satisfied with a parcel of land and a handful of gold, to those who desire power, dominion, slaves, there is more territory to be conquered in the name of Santiago and the King. His Majesty, Carlos Quinto, has ordered that this be done. He has commanded that an army be mobilized at once and an expedition sent forward to the south until there shall not be one hectare of land between Panama and the Straits but acknowledges the King as its ruler, until there shall not remain one infidel on earth who does not acknowledge Christ as his Lord."

The Marquis paused, waited a few moments that his words might have more weight, then added: "He who would join such an army, let him come forward."

Pedro de Valdivia was first to accept the challenge. Taking three steps toward his chief, he stood like a statue, waiting for others to follow.

Gerónimo de Alderete was next. Others followed their example. Some of the officers of the army of Hernando Pizarro were among them; likewise Ignacio Garcia, with the wicked patch over his eye, Papa Juan, old Pepe, whom they called El Pavo, hitching along on his crutches, Tio Pocitos. Yet in all there were not more than seventeen who answered the call.

The Marquis lowered his sword and touched Pedro de Valdivia on the shoulder:

"Conqueror of Chile! I salute you!" he said.

A shout went up from the ranks. *"Viva Valdivia! Viva el Conquistador!"* they cheered, but when Don

Pedro signaled them to come forward and join him, they shook their heads and murmured: "Chile? Not for us. Anywhere but Chile. It is a cold land—and barren. It has been the grave of too many Christians already."

Hardly had they finished their mutterings when a commotion was heard. Ines Suarez turning, with the others, saw a rider on horseback cantering into the plaza. He cantered toward the Marquis and when his horse was alongside, he took a parchment from his saddlebag and unrolling it with a flourish, handed it to the Marquis.

With a start Ines recognized the rider. It was Sancho de Hoz, the mischief-maker of the *Esperanza,* he who accosted her in the dark *calles* of Panama, who had swaggered about on the mole at Seville, boasting of his knowledge of the new lands. She had not seen him since she landed from the *Esperanza* at the harbor of Los Reyes. Neither had anyone else in Cuzco. Yet here he was once more, bold and presumptuous.

The Marquis' eyes rested a moment on the parchment. Then he asked: "What is this?"

"It is an order from the King," said Sancho de Hoz. His look was haughty. "It is my *cédula* authorizing me to head the expedition to conquer Chile."

The Marquis started. Ines looked quickly toward Pedro de Valdivia. His brow was calm. His manner unruffled.

A soldier near her whispered. "Something strange in this. The Marquis cannot read a line, and everyone who knows him is aware of it."

The Marquis' face was puzzled. He continued to

look at the parchment. Then, rolling it up, he handed it back to its owner.

"You may report to me in the morning," he said. "I will give you my answer, then."

With that he dismissed his soldiers. The cavalry spurred their horses and departed from the plaza. The gunners followed, led by Pedro de Valdivia.

Ines Suarez returned to the Temple of the Virgins.

All the rest of that day the thought of Sancho de Hoz obsessed her. She remembered the tales she had heard while waiting on the mole at Seville, of how Sancho de Hoz had gambled away the King's fifth. She remembered his impatience to leave Seville. She remembered his snarl of scorn the night in Panama when the soldiers were telling in the quarters of the bishop that Pedro de Valdivia would lead the next expedition of conquest. She remembered his words on the *Esperanza*: "Let us land here at Trujillo and while the King is settling the dispute as to whom the city of Cuzco belongs, we can advance into Chile and divide the spoils amongst ourselves."

She determined to report her suspicions to the Marquis, which she did before sunset, and when the Marquis had listened to her in silence, he said:

"Sancho de Hoz will bear watching, but Don Pedro de Valdivia will not believe it. Don Pedro is the bravest soldier in Peru. He has more military genius than all the brothers Pizarro put together. He knows how to farm the soil and feed an army—but when it comes to judging men, he is a child. He trusts everyone. He thinks all mankind is his friend."

Not so the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro. He trusted few men. He did not know whether the

cédula presented by Sancho de Hoz was a forgery or authentic, but acting on Ines' hint, he ordered Don Sancho to return to the harbor of Los Reyes; to possess himself of two ships with the necessary complement of men, of arms, horses and two hundred cuirasses in addition, and then to proceed down the coast and join Pedro de Valdivia somewhere in Chile.

The Marquis had no faith that Sancho de Hoz would accomplish his mission. His idea was to gain time for Pedro de Valdivia to assemble his army and be on his way.

The Marquis need have been in no hurry. Assembling an army was not so easy a matter. Why should a soldier risk his life in the desert when he could take his ease in Peru?

Day after day Ines Suarez watched the progress Don Pedro was making. From Don Gerónimo de Alderete, from old Pepe, from Papa Juan and the others she heard of the difficulty he was encountering in securing soldiers to join him.

Not that it mattered to her—she told herself—whether Pedro de Valdivia succeeded or not. What was his success to her—he who had a wife in Spain? It was the King's order, only, with which she was concerned. The King's order must be obeyed.

For days Ines waited. What if Pedro de Valdivia failed? What if Sancho de Hoz succeeded in securing his two ships with their complement of men, of arms, of horses?

Sometimes when Ines went about the plaza (for since the coming of the Marquis she was free to go and to come at will) she would see Pedro de Valdivia addressing a group of soldiers, would see them shake

their heads and shrug their shoulders, would note the expression on his face as he walked away.

For days she pondered. Then one night when the sun had set and the evening gun had sounded and before the moon was up or any star in sight, Ines left the Temple of the Virgins, and crossing the plaza, went straightway to the hill that led to the Fortress of Sacsahuaman. A sentry pointed the way. It was there the infantry was quartered. The sentry had been with her in the army of Captain Quiroga on its journey from Los Reyes. He knew her for the soldier that she was. He pointed to a subterannean passage and to a staircase hewn through the solid rock.

Ines ascended the staircase. She found herself inside the massive stone wall of the fortress with its towers and its palaces which had once housed the Inca chiefs. Now it was the vantage ground of the *arcabuzeros* who, surveying the territory around, could have warning of the approach of danger.

A low fire burned on a hummock, that the gunners might have match lighted at the instant of need. By the light of the fire Ines located a low stone house for which she was looking. As she drew near she saw that the door of the house was open. Within, standing beside a table, his foot resting on a bench beside him, his head supported by his hand, Pedro de Valdivia was engrossed in a map spread before him. One finger was tracing a route.

On the bench were his casque and his gauntlets, his breastplate and shield. So deeply was he engrossed that he did not hear Ines enter until she was well inside the door. Instantly he turned but saw only an outline,

for the flambeau threw very little light. Thinking, no doubt, it was some young soldier, he said:

"I gave orders that no one should be admitted after the evening gun. Who are you and what do you want?"

Ines stepped forward. He held the flambeau up to look at her more closely.

"You have come!" he said. His voice rang with pleasure. *"Flamencita!"* he exclaimed. "It is you! You have come!"

"I have come!" she said.

He rushed toward her. The light of the flambeau gleamed on her armor, her cuirass.

"In armor?" he said, simply. "You come in armor? What is it you fear? My sword or my arms?"

"I fear nothing," she said. She unbuckled her cuirass and flung it from her.

"Still you come garbed as a soldier," he said.

"I come as a woman," she said, "but I fear nothing." Her voice was low. She unbuckled her soldier belt and removed her soldier coat. Her white blouse with its rounded neck and its sleeves short to the elbows, showed her, indeed, as a woman; the pale gold of her neck, her rounded arms, the outline of her breasts.

She walked toward him. Their hands touched. A current shot through them. He flung his arms about her. She offered no resistance. She felt the beat of his heart. Her arms stole about his neck. Her fingers caressed him, caressed his neck, his short-cropped hair, as they had caressed him that night in the moonlight, he in armor and the bars of the window between. Now they were alone. Their lips had found each other.

María Ortiz de Gaete was forgotten. Sancho de Hoz was a myth.

How long they clung together, they could not have told. The world about them was still. There was a silence as of impending disaster. They heard a strange sound. The earth seemed to move beneath their feet. The stone walls rocked and swayed, then the door slammed shut.

"What is it? What is it?" asked Ines.

"It is the *terremoto!*" (the earthquake!) he said. "We have them often in this land. Do not move. Stand here. Here, beneath the flat arch of this door there is safety. Sometimes the roofs collapse. This is the safest place."

They stood together beneath the wide arch of the door. Heart beat against heart but the beating was not from fear. For a few moments they waited. Then all was still once more. Pedro de Valdivia tried the door. It would not open.

"The quake has passed," he said, "but the arch of the door has sunk. We are prisoners here together."

"It is the will of God," said Ines.

"Another shock may come," he told her.

"What does it matter?" she asked. "We are together." And once more her arms went around his neck.

Hours passed. The pale lemon light of morning had come but did not penetrate to their prison. They heard sounds outside.

"You are safe?" asked voices outside. "We feared that harm had befallen you."

"Safe!" called Pedro de Valdivia, "but the door will not open."

Soon there were heavy blows of battle-axes and when the door was broken open, Gerónimo de Alderete and Francisco Pizarro, the Marquis, stood outside.

"We feared that harm had come to you," said Don Gerónimo. "It was a severe quake. I, myself, was caught in a subterannean passage. It is only now I have been freed by the Marquis and his men."

They exhibited no surprise at finding Doña Ines with Valdivia. Surprises were not common among soldiers of that day.

"Are my men safe?" asked Valdivia. "Were many injured?"

"It was more severe on the other side of the plaza," said the Marquis. "The Chapel of the Rainbow collapsed, and buried two old men beneath it. But," he added, "one had already lost his eye, and they were both very, very old."

Ines made the sign of the cross on her forehead. *"Santa María!"* she said. "Ignacio Garcia and Papa Juan. But the others? Old Pepe? Tio Pocitos!"

"Both safe and sound," said the Marquis, "and eager to set off with Don Pedro when he marches off for the south."

Ines turned to the Marquis: *"Excellencia,"* she said, "I have a favor to ask. When the expedition sets off for the south, I too would march with Don Pedro."

The Marquis smiled a significant smile. "It is granted," he said.

Her red lips flashed a smile. She turned to Pedro de Valdivia.

"Señor! I go!" she said.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE MARCH BEGINS

HIS Majesty, Charles the Fifth, from his gold throne in Valladolid, had ordered that the expedition start for Chile at once. The Marquis was of the same mind. But Carlos, the King, and Francisco Pizarro, the Marquis, were not going to Chile. Pedro de Valdivia, the leader, and Ines Suarez, who was to accompany him, were practical persons. Though they were faithful servants to their King and their Marquis, they knew it was no small thing, no task to be tossed off before breakfast, to prepare for such a journey.

"Once we have set out faces to the south," said Valdivia, "there shall be no turning back. We will know neither rest nor peace until the land of Chile is conquered and New Toledo possessed for the King. But the Indians of Chile are not easily subdued like these slaves of the Incas. They are fierce fighters. We cannot conquer them with two dozen men and one woman, and that is all who have volunteered so far. We must have ten times that number."

They were in the house of Pedro de Valdivia, where the Marquis and Gerónimo de Alderete had left them the morning after the earthquake. The map of Chile was spread out on the table between them. Their breakfast was cold.

"Fear not, Pedro *mio,*" said Ines. "Other men will join."

"We must have money as well as men," Don Pedro replied, "and slaves as well as both."

"You have slaves," said Ines. "Has not the Marquis promised you four hundred Indians as well as an *encomienda* and a silver mine as your part of the victory over Don Diego de Almagro?"

"If I leave Peru," he replied, "I leave my *encomienda* and my mines."

"Then take your Indians," she said. "Much more awaits you in Chile. You will be ruler of the land."

"You are right, *querida,*" he told her. "More awaits us both in Chile. But it is not to be had for the asking. The road to glory is never smooth. I will see if I can borrow some money on my silver mine and take my four hundred Indians as slaves. But—we must have more than money and slaves. We must have food—unless, like Don Diego de Almagro and his men, we eat the flesh of our frozen horses, or the bodies of our dead companions."

He spoke as a soldier speaks, and as a soldier Ines Suarez heard.

"We can take salt meat," she told him. "We have pork-salters here who can prepare the flesh of the llamas. The slaves can carry our stores."

"Salt meat requires much water, Ines *mia,*" he said, "and the wells of the desert are far apart. Have you not heard of the sufferings of Almagro's men, how many of them went mad from thirst, though they strung themselves out like beads on a necklace, traveling ten by ten, that the water holes might have time to fill up

after the first ten passed and before the next ten arrived?"

"Then we must take fresh meat and chickens," said Ines. "Already some swine are coming from Spain. We can send to Panama for chickens or rob the hen-roosts of Cuzco. Ah, could we but have some of the pigs of Extremadura; or the sheep from the hills of León! Could we but have the turkeys of Plasencia!" The dreams came into her eyes as she thought of Plasencia, with sheep grazing on the hills, with turtle-doves mating in the wild olives. But this was no time for dreams. This was a time for reality. "Old Pepe can take charge of the chickens," she said. "He was a breeder of turkeys in Spain."

"We shall have plenty of time to await the coming of supplies," said Valdivia. "For whether we wish it or not, we must delay awhile before setting out on our journey. Already the month is April and snows are falling in the mountains. Unless we wish to make our graves in the snow, we must wait until the winter has passed."

Disappointment wrote its shadow in the face of Ines Suarez. She was impatient to be on the march, impatient that Pedro de Valdivia should have an empire of his own, fearful that Sancho de Hoz would return.

"Whatever comes," she said, "you will not let Sancho de Hoz join you in the expedition."

Pedro de Valdivia laughed. "Sancho de Hoz is a harmless fellow," he said.

"He wants to conquer Chile," she said.

"Let him come," he told her. "He will soon find that it takes more than silken curls and velvet breeches to conquer the fierce Indian of that land."

"He will try to take the leadership from you," she urged.

"And what then?" he asked. "I shall die fighting, and what more can a soldier do, than to fight and to die?"

"Spring is so far away!" sighed Ines.

"We will find plenty to keep us busy," said Valdivia. "There will be harness to make, and new stirrups. Extra horseshoes and nails. It is more than a hundred leagues through the desert alone and far more than that over the mountains, both before and after we reach the desert, if the maps are true. Four shoes to each horse will not go far on such a journey, and the shoes must be made of iron and not of silver as they are now. Silver on a horse's hoof is a dainty trinket, like the bracelet on your arm; but we shall need iron for such a journey, and the only iron in this land is what we have brought with us."

"Uncle Pocitos is a blacksmith," said Ines. "He claims to have been smith to the King. Perhaps he will have time——"

"He will have more time than money—and so shall we all," laughed Valdivia, "and doubtless more money than men. For there are few yet who have offered to join me."

Ines was silent for a time. After awhile she spoke.

"Fear not. The men will come. I have a plan."

The grave eyes of Pedro de Valdivia flamed with jealousy. He leapt to his feet and, striding around the table, lifted Ines' face to his and gazed searchingly into her eyes.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "You have a plan? Tell me!" His voice rang with fervor.

Ines' arms curved upward, encircling his neck and drawing him down to her, kissed him.

"Ah, no, Pedro *mio!*" she said. "No other shall claim. Fear not. I have come a long way to join you. I am yours while life lasts. Fear not, but believe me. I have a plan. You will have an army of soldiers when you are ready to set off for Chile."

So saying she took leave of him and crossing the plaza went straight to the Chapel of the Lightning. It was there old Pepe and Uncle Pocitos had been quartered since the earthquake had demolished their Chapel of the Rainbow, killing their two comrades.

Across the plaza she went, unescorted now—alone. No need of the protection of the soldiers. She was the beloved of their chief.

She found Pepe and Uncle Pocitos impatient, eager for new adventure. They were saddened by the loss of their comrades but they were not cast down. They had come to the new world for gain and for glory and they would not be content until they found what they sought, or died in the search.

They spoke of the two who were gone and recalled the others who, one by one, had departed since they set out so blithely from Seville.

"We were seventy in number when we left the mole at Seville," said old Pepe. "Now we are two."

"Now you are two," agreed Ines. "Two brave men and Christ with you. Do you not remember what the bishop said: 'It is only a handful that are needed if Christ is on the side of the few.'"

She told them of the plans of Pedro de Valdivia: how Uncle Pocitos was to be blacksmith of the expedition with a forge of his own and with orders to find

enough iron to make shoes for the horses and stirrups for the saddles; how Pepe was to have charge of the livestock.

The eyes of the old men sparkled. Then with one breath they said: "And you—our guardian angel—you will go with us?"

"I—of course. Could I remain behind when the King has given orders to go forward? While there is gold to be found? Land to be added to Spain? And infidels who know not the true Church? Of course I shall go with Don Pedro."

That was her answer to everyone in Cuzco. "Of course I shall go with Don Pedro." Sometimes she would say it very loudly, speaking now to this one, now to that, whenever a group of soldiers were within hearing, adding always: "Of course I shall go. Why not? Even the old men are going. Uncle Pocitos. Old Pepe, who has but one leg."

Thus she passed the word, and just as she had assured Pedro de Valdivia, the list of volunteers grew daily. She knew the pride of her countrymen.

There was nothing precipitate, nothing hurried in the preparations that were made. Valdivia was far too practical a soldier for that. Not even his zeal to carry out the orders of his King and the wishes of the Marquis could make him start one day before everything was in readiness.

"We must make haste slowly," he would say to Ines. "We must do the thing right from the start. We must not set out for conquest armed with our swords and our good intentions. The Indians of Chile are warlike. They are not the docile creatures that the Incas have made of these natives of Peru. Don Diego de Almagro

spent five hundred thousand gold *pesos* to conquer them. He lost ten thousand Indians and most of his horses, and those of his soldiers who returned came back like ghosts. All he accomplished by his efforts was to give twice as much heart to the Indians of Chile."

Therefore, although it was April, 1539, when the Marquis had given the order to Pedro de Valdivia to set out, January of the following year had come before the army was ready to march. Yet, so thoroughly had Valdivia worked, so thoroughly had Ines Suarez assisted him, that it was more a moving city than an army of expedition that formed that day in the Plaza of Cuzco.

Everything that was necessary to settle and colonize a country they carried: seeds from Spain, principally wheat, though they did not neglect the orange, the peach, the grape, the nectarine. Corn and sweet potatoes from Peru they took also, not knowing that they would find both growing in the land to the south. Plenty of domestic animals as well: goats, sheep, swine from Extremadura and crates of chickens and turkeys —to the delight of old Pepe's heart. Nor did they omit the farm implements, hoes, shovels, axes; while Uncle Pocitos, in spite of his years, had wrought well with his forge and made horseshoes and stirrups sufficient— or so he believed—to carry them to the end of their journey.

Some of the food they had labored so long to secure they were forced to leave behind. "The Marquis has need of it," so Pedro de Valdivia said, and for him that was sufficient order. "We will take only enough to carry us through the desert," he said, "and to keep

for sowing and breeding once we are settled in the land."

At daybreak the cavalcade assembled—and what a cavalcade it was! Pedro de Valdivia in the lead, mounted on a heavy Arabian charger which he rode as a centaur might ride, as if horse and rider were one. His lithe limbs were encased in jambeaux; his broad chest and shoulders were made broader by their coat of shining armor. On his hands were mailed gauntlets and on his left arm he wore an oval shield. His lance rested in the socket of his carved leather saddle and was held in position by thongs of leather attached to his horse's chest. The silken pennon at the end of his lance danced merrily with the rhythm of his horse's step. On its proper hook hung his mace. A steel casque covered his head and his face, showing only his red Spanish lips, his strong nose, his grave, serious eyes. He was every inch the conqueror, every inch the soldier.

Beside him, on the white horse given to her by Gaspar de Espinosa when she landed in Peru, rode Doña Ines de Suarez. Her shoulders, too, were clad in mail, a morion was on her head. Her lance and her mace were at her side. Her soldier-pantaloons were covered by the long skirts that trailed almost to the ground. She rode sidewise on her horse and fastened to one shoulder was a cape of soft, smooth leather. She, too, was a soldier, yet more than a soldier. She was a woman—the beloved of the chief.

She turned to Pedro de Valdivia, flashing a smile of joy. He returned her smile. His expression was more than that of the conqueror. It was the look of the eternal lover.

Behind them were ranged as valiant a band as ever set forth for conquest: Gerónimo de Alderete, veteran of Spain, of Peru, yet gayly adventurous as a boy setting out for his first taste of war; Captain Alonzo de Monroy, one of Valdivia's favorite companions; Pedro de Moncada, another brave soldier; Pedro Gomez, who had been on Almagro's expedition and knew the route; and others, numbering in all one hundred soldiers.

The flag of Spain, the green cross of Charles the Fifth, fluttered gallantly in the breeze and after it the arms of Pedro de Valdivia, both carried by a picked guard of honor.

The infantry, the *arcabuzeros,* on foot, and with them Uncle Pocitos, while old Pepe, disdaining the offer of a mule, hitched along on his crutches, as high-hearted as if he had a hundred legs to draw from should his good one weary on the march.

Three priests accompanied them—Father Rodrigo Gonzales, Father Diego Perez, Father Juan Lobo—seated sidewise on their mules, clad in their robes of black serge, their heads bare and the tinkle of their mules' bells lending a merry note.

A half dozen pieces of artillery, culverins of small bore moved on wheels, were dragged by Indian slaves.

Behind the soldiers trailed the three thousand *yanaconas*—the Indian slaves of Peru. Some of them were women with children running at their sides or carried in slings on their backs. Some of the women slaves carried their heads high—they who had been daughters of the Inca or Virgins of the Inca, though virgins no longer. It had been ten years since the Spaniards reached Peru.

(From a Spanish painting)

PIZARRO MARCHING ON THE CAPITAL OF THE INCAS

Every slave bore his burden: boxes of munitions, guns, a crate of chickens on his back, a bundle of hoes, a bag of seed, a pig, a goat, a kid, the iron shoes for the horses. The Inca had trained his slaves well to act as beasts of burden.

A trumpet sounded. Pedro de Valdivia lifted his sword.

"Adelante!" he shouted. *"Cristo y Santiago!"*

"For Spain and the King!" cried Ines Suarez.

"Adelante! España! El Rey! Santiago!" The cry passed along the column, was taken up by soldier after soldier. *"Viva España. Vive el Rey! Viva Valdivia! Viva Nuevo Toledo!"*

The banners snapped in the breeze. The horses pranced, their nostrils dilating to the clear mountain air. The infantry quickened its pace. The feet of the Indian slaves trotted faster. Gallantly, hopefully, prayerfully, fearlessly, the army of Pedro de Valdivia surged forward. One hundred and fifty leagues lay between them and the desert. More than a hundred leagues of desert lay between them and Chile. After Chile—what? They did not know; they did not care. The King had ordered them to go forth. Forward then, for Christ, the King and Santiago!

Blithely that intrepid band set off that January morning. Blithely they journeyed across the rock-strewn tableland. The sun was on their left hand when they started. It rose over their heads as they climbed upward, upward to the roof of the world. It rose over their heads as they marched, and was hidden behind the Andes before they reached the valley of the Vilcañota, where llamas and alpacas nibbled the sparse grass or perched perilously on the Inca terraces that

rose row on even row to the very summit of the mountains. Darkness caught them in the cleft of the Andes, and there they made camp.

Ines Suarez sprang from her horse and turned to Pedro de Valdivia. The end of their first day's journey had come.

"You do not regret?" he asked. "You would not turn back?"

Her gaze was steadfast. "I do not regret. I would not turn back."

Their tents were struck by the side of a thin stream that trickled down from the mountain. Valdivia's tent was guarded only by his chamber boys. No need of sentries while he was in Peru. Here the Spaniard had triumphed. Here the Indian was subdued. Ines Suarez had a tent apart and was attended by women slaves. But at night when the bright stars sparkled above the cleft in the mountains, she went to him and remained with him until the gleam of the camp fire faded into the pale light of morning.

When it was time to mount and go forward for the second day, they stood together beside their horses. Pedro de Valdivia pointed to the thin mountain stream that trickled down from the snows. At the foot of the mountain it divided into two tiny rivulets, one flowing backward along the route they had come, the other forward toward Chile.

"This is the summit of the mountains," he said, "the great Andean divide lies here." He pointed to the stream that trickled backward along the route they had come and said: "Back there lie comfort, peace, luxury for you—for the Marquis is ready to reward you handsomely—you who saved the life of his brother." Then

he pointed to the other stream that flowed forward along the route they must travel. "This way lie toil, privation, thirst, hunger, perhaps death in the desert, or, if the desert is safely passed, warfare—perhaps worse than warfare—at the hands of the Indians. It is for you to choose. Now is the time. Will you go forward—or back?"

Ines laughed, and stooping low, dipped her fingers in the icy stream that flowed forward—to Chile. She made the sign of the cross on her forehead with her wet fingers. Then she pressed them to the brow of Pedro de Valdivia, saying: "In the name of Christ and the King we go forward together while life lasts."

"While life lasts!" he repeated, and mounting his horse, he gave the order to go forward.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

YOUR LITTLE CAT HAS CAUGHT A RAT

ADELANTE! Forward! For the King!"

Pedro de Valdivia's voice rang out again in the clear mountain air, ordering his army to put itself on the march.

Refreshed by the night, sustained by morning mass and breakfast, spurred by the love of adventure, the hope of gain, the expedition moved forward.

To the majority of the soldiers in that army, the presence of Ines Suarez—the only Spanish woman—among them was no matter for conjecture. That she was an unusual Spanish woman, was true. That she was beautiful, there was no denying. That she was brave, she had proved. Even had they given her much thought, they would probably have reasoned thus: she was young, she was a widow, she had left Spain in company with her husband, an unknown soldier, who had died on the voyage. So much for that. She had reached Panama under the care of her bishop. She had continued her journey to Peru guarded by a squad of old men who called her their guardian angel. She had joined the army of Pedro de Valdivia with the express permission of the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro. In the records of the chronicler of that expedition she was listed as having supervision over the women servants of Pedro de Valdivia, as having charge

of his ambulating home. For the majority of the soldiers, this was enough. Pedro de Valdivia was their idol, their chief. If he wished to carry a woman—a regiment of women—that was his right. It had been the right of chieftains since the days of Attila. They were on their way to a new land, where they would find gold and glory.

Never was a day more fair for an army of conquest to continue its march. The pale sun rose, turning from lemon to orange, to tangerine, to rosy red. It tinged the tops of the mountains and caused the snows to melt and trickle down in ribbon streams to join the rivulet at their feet. Along the bed of the rivulet, which widened as they advanced league by league, they moved in single file through the narrow cleft.

Pedro de Valdivia was in the lead. Ines Suarez was close behind him. The voices of the soldiers echoed against the granite walls. The pat-pat of barefoot Indians trotting, after the manner of their race, stressed the accent of the horses' hoofs ringing against the stones. Now and then there was the faint bleat of a kid jolting on the shoulders of an Indian, or the faint wail of an infant slung likewise on its mother's back. Occasionally there was the cackle of a hen from its crate, the gusty laugh of a soldier, the creak of the culverin wheels.

Gradually they descended from the rooftop of the world, circling wide to avoid going over the mountains. Already they had reached an altitude of more than thirteen thousand feet, with sixty leagues between them and their first objective—the newly founded city of Arequipa.

By the end of a week they sighted the peaks of

Chachani, Pichú-Pichú, of El Mistí, with its top forever shrouded in a mist that floated outward like a white mantilla from the head of a beautiful woman. For a week more they marched through a waste of red foothills following those snow-capped peaks, which seemed always just at arm's reach, so easily are the eyes of men deceived by distance in the rare air of high altitudes. Then they traveled hour after hour through deserts of moving sands dotted with great *medaños,* armies of those crescent-shaped dunes composed of particles of fine sand kept continually in motion, the whole mass moving like giant moles inching eternally forward, with horns forever bared to the trade winds.

The nights were bitter cold, even for those who had lived long in Cuzco and had grown accustomed to the chill of high elevations. But the soldiers laughed at the cold. They had warm garments of wool and the furs of llama and alpaca in which to roll up for the night. As for the Indians—what did it matter about them? They were not men and women. They were slaves—beasts of burden—trained by the Incas, their masters, to accept the will of their overlords.

Often on the march Pedro de Valdivia turned to Ines Suarez, studying her with his grave eyes, filled with amazement and admiration that her woman's strength did not falter. Neither cold nor wind seemed to daunt her. The hardships of the march she ignored. She sat her horse like an Amazon. The light of the crusader burned in her eyes.

"Weary? No?" he would ask when for hours on hours her horse had wound its way over a rocky road that lay almost perpendicularly downward.

She would fling her head high and flash a radiant smile.

"The greater the hardship," she would say, "the greater the reward." And at night her reward was found in the arms of her lover.

At the end of two weeks the army had reached Arequipa. There they were joined by Captain Francisco de Aguirre, a soldier of distinction, and with him a fresh contingent of men—thirty at least—who, having despaired of receiving their reward in Peru, were eager to push on to new fields where gold was said to be in greater abundance.

The following week brought them to the settlement of Moquehua. Here another contingent of soldiers joined them. They numbered now close to one hundred and fifty men and horses.

So far all was peace. They were still in the land of the Inca, whom they had conquered. Here they could purchase supplies or take them by force if they liked. Thus they constantly reprovisioned what stock the march had exhausted.

Yet Ines' brow grew troubled after they left Moquehua. Thinking she feared the desert that lay before them, or that her anxiety grew from tales she heard along the way of the fierceness of the tribes they were soon to meet, Valdivia asked her.

"You are troubled, *querida.* What is it?" he asked. "You do not regret that you have come?"

"I am with you," she replied. "I regret nothing."

"Yet you are troubled," he insisted. "I can read it in your eyes."

"Well, then, I am troubled," she admitted. "I am

wondering if the provisions planned for one hundred will be sufficient to feed fifty extra."

Valdivia laughed heartily. "How like a woman!" he said. "Anxious about the stomachs of her menfolk. Have no fear. The army will be fed. We shall stop in the provinces of Arica and Tarapacá. We shall still be in the country of the conquered. There we shall add fresh supplie. before entering the desert. And even in the desert there are oases. There is one near the River Loa, so Don Diego de Almagro's men said. It is a fertile spot, with a little settlement of Indians. There will be plenty of food for us all as well as for the horses and the *Indios.*"

"Suppose Sancho de Hoz has succeeded in recruiting an army. Suppose he has reached Chile ahead of us."

Again Pedro de Valdivia laughed. "He? Sancho de Hoz? Forever you worry about him. If he had wanted to join me he could have done so at Arequipa or Moquehua."

"Very well," said Ines. "It is not for myself I am afraid. But two things I know. One is that Sancho de Hoz does not love you. The other is that you cannot divide an egg and feed two hungry soldiers."

Valdivia made some light answer and continued on his journey, but before he left the province of Arica he had reason to believe that some of the fears of Ines were well founded.

Hardly had he reached Arica when he was met by a haggard captain, one Francisco de Villagra, who, with twenty half-starved soldiers, had emerged from a province which the Indians called the Chunchos and which the Spaniards had been unable to conquer. More than their number had died from hunger or from the

hardships of the road, so Captain Villagra told Valdivia. Those who survived, though on horseback, were unfed and filled with fever. Among them was Captain Rodrigo de Quiroga, recovering from a broken leg. Knowing them all for brave soldiers, Valdivia took them into his army. They saw no sign of Sancho de Hoz, though Ines Suarez was forever on the watch. Now they numbered one hundred and seventy Spaniards, bound for the conquest of Chile.

It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to trace every step of that journey. The chronicles later were lost.

So long as they traveled in Peru, they found little to impede their progress except the elements and the natural hazards that beset an army on the march. The supplies they had bought in Arica were rapidly depleted by the mouths of hungry men. Yet Valdivia did not regret the addition of those men to his army.

"We shall need every soldier we can get," Valdivia told Ines. "The greater the army, the more the Indians of Chile will fear us, and if the reports we have heard are true, those Indians are not easily conquered."

Some of the Indians brought from Peru died from cold and exposure. Some of the horses, far more valuable in the eyes of the Spaniard than a hundred or more Indians, died from the effects of altitude or from falls sustained in the sharp descents. Whenever a soldier was ill or a horse unable to travel, they were carried in litters supported on the heads of the Indians. As soon as they were able to travel, they were put down and resumed the journey.

To give every detail of that march of Pedro de Valdivia and his army would be to repeat—in large part at least—the details of the march of every army of

invasion since the world began. Well did the Spaniards know, by race inheritance, by tradition, by experience, the tactics of an army of invasion. The Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Romans, the Goths, the Arabs, the Moors—each in their turn had made their contribution, their imprint on the soul of the Spaniard. So, with something acquired from all the hosts that had invaded the land of their birth, the army of Pedro de Valdivia proceeded on its way to Chile. They marched! They suffered! They endured! They rested! They marched! They suffered—endured again! They pillaged where necessary and where hindered they destroyed. It was the aim of Pedro de Valdivia to leave the country through which they passed exactly as they found it. But where has an army of invasion ever left things exactly as it found them?

They followed the route to the desert through which Diego de Almagro and his band had come when they returned to Cuzco five years earlier, defeated in their attempt to conquer the Indians of Chile. It was the same route that the Incas of Peru had followed more than a century earlier when they too, defeated in an attempt to conquer the Indians of Chile, had returned ingloriously to Cuzco.

But centuries of defeated invaders did not daunt Pedro de Valdivia. Nor did they defeat Ines Suarez, who marched with him, nor the bulk of his army of one hundred and seventy men who went gallantly on their way, their broadswords at their belts, pennoned lances before them and the green cross of Carlos the Fifth of Spain fluttering over their heads. It required more than centuries of defeated invaders to daunt the

three black-garbed priests with their crucifixes in their hands and the tinkle of mulebells in their ears.

As for the Indian slaves who trotted day after day, their melancholy eyes cast downward, their backs heavy with burdens—they had been baptized by the priests. They must follow the strange Christian God who, like themselves, had borne his burden—his cross. Their condition was changed but little by Christian baptism from what it had been when they worshiped their pagan god—the Sun. The burden on their backs was no lighter—the road was no smoother for their bleeding feet.

At the entrance to the desert Pedro de Valdivia gave the order for rest. He took stock of the condition of his men, his horses, his ordnance, his supply of provisions for man and beast. Satisfied that he had sufficient supplies to last until the River Loa should be reached, he let the army rest a few days longer to gather strength, then passed the order that the following morning at daybreak they would resume the march.

"Tomorrow at daybreak," he said, "we advance. First we must conquer the desert. Once the desert is passed, New Toledo will be ours. More souls for Christ. Another kingdom for Spain. Land, gold, slaves for the victors. Is it not right, my companions? Is it not right, *padres mios?* Tomorrow at daybreak we go forward! Do not let your hearts fail you, for in the midst of the desert there is a river of sweet water. It is called the River Loa—the River of Praise. There we shall find little hamlets, *rancherías* inhabited by Indians. There we shall replenish our supplies. There we shall rest once more. Forward, then, for New Toledo and Spain!"

"Forward!" the cry rang out, echoed down the column of soldiers.

"Forward!" exclaimed Ines Suarez—then in a moment was silent.

Far down the column she noted the sullen face of a soldier—a horseman, named Escobar—who shook his head and shrugged his shoulders and turned his face away from Pedro de Valdivia, his leader, to whisper to his nearby companions.

"Escobar is restless," she told herself. "He is discouraged." But she said nothing of this to Valdivia, and next morning when the column was ready to go forward Escobar gave no further sign of sullenness. "Nevertheless, I shall watch," she decided. "One disgruntled soldier can do much harm to an army."

She saw no further signs of unrest, however, in the manner of Escobar, and the army pursued its way, journeying deeper and deeper day after day into the bleak heart of the desert.

For four months they traveled through the desert of Atacama. As the days rolled themselves into months they began to despair of the oasis that Valdivia had promised. But day followed day and still the desert stretched before them; not a mere waste of sand as one frequently pictures a desert. Here was a desert of mountains, of volcanoes—a sea of flat-topped, melancholy hills that had no beginning, no end. A wilderness of dry salt basins blinded them with a fierce white glare more brilliant than the sunlight that poured down from above. Hour after hour they skirted those gleaming basins of salt famished for the water they hoarded in skins, not daring to drink their scanty supply until they should be sure of more, until they should reach

the River Loa with its sweet water. Now they traveled hour after hour through a waste of shifting sands that sucked at their feet and at the feet of their horses. After a time their road lay upward again, climbing to high elevations where the winds cut their faces like knives and the cold froze the blood in their veins. Fogs rolled over them, leaving them helpless as a ship at sea. Still they journeyed on, day after day, seeing no sign of human life, only now and then a condor wheeling high in the air waiting for a soldier to die or a horse to fall. Only once at night they were startled at the sight of a solitary horseman leaning against the rocks and beside him his horse, standing like statues carved of stone.

Valdivia called out, ordering the soldier to come forward, and when he gave no heed sent Gerónimo de Alderete to approach and speak with the stranger. The others, watching, saw Alderete go forward, saw him make the sign of the cross on his forehead while his horse reared backward in fright. Then he came back to the column.

"Muerte!" he said. Dead! The horse and its rider. Dead and frozen to stone by the cold, dry air of the desert. One of Don Diego de Almagro's soldiers with his horse, frozen and preserved as in life by the desert dryness of the high elevation.

It was four months, almost to the day, from the time of setting out from Arequipa that they sighted the little settlement—the oasis—of which Valdivia had told them. Their weary eyes, blinded by the glare and dust of the desert, thought it a mirage at first, but as they drew near they were gladdened by a group of thatched

huts—the *rucas* of the Chilean Indians, nestling on the banks of a river.

Their parched tongues slavered at the sight of the cool, sweet water, but Valdivia ordered them to have caution. Then dismounting, he approached the *rucas,* calling out to the inmates to come out in the name of Mary, the Virgin. But the echo of his voice was his only answer, and entering, the soldiers found that the *rucas* were empty. More than that, there was no food in sight. Not a handful of peas, not a sweet potato, not an ear of corn for their horses. It was easy enough to search the *rucas* built of four upright posts stuck in the ground and united above with other crossed posts—a rectangle walled and roofed with skins and with the roofskins covered with thatch. The earth was the floor and in the center of one hut a fire still glowed faintly, showing that but lately it had been occupied.

"Search the thickets!" ordered Valdivia. "The owners of these mansions cannot be far distant. Find them and bring them here."

Pedro Gomez, *maestre de campo,* gave orders to two of his lieutenants to take a detachments of gunners and search the thickets along the river. Then taking possession of the hamlet, the army prepared for rest.

Before nightfall the two lieutenants had returned, and with them came defiantly four stalwart Indians, who stood with bare arms crossed on strong bare chests. Taller than most of the Spaniards, taller than the Indians of Peru, and of a lighter, coppery color, these four warriors—for warriors they must have been from their manner—stood defiant and sullen, dressed in garments of furs, their arms and their legs bare.

Questioned by the interpreters—the priests—who

had learned the Mapuche dialect of the Indian of Chile as well as the Quichua of Peru, the Indians refused to talk, but under torture they admitted that they had been warned of the coming of the Christians. By that grapevine route known to the Indian, word had come that the Christian invader was on his way. Some of the Incas who had hidden in the hills about Cuzco had sent word by their runners to their neighbors that the Christian was coming to endeavor to enslave them, that if they wanted the Christians to go back as Armero (Almagro) had gone back, defeated, they should hide all their food, their clothing, their llamas, their gold; that once the Christian learned that there were no spoils, no gold, he would return to his own land and leave the Indian at peace.

This the defiant Indians admitted, admitting, also, that they had faithfully obeyed instructions. What was more, they had feasted on their llamas and foodstuffs; they had destroyed their crops and their clothing. Their country was bare. This they revealed under torture, but no amount of torture could compel them to reveal the hiding places of their gold nor to tell on what they expected to live since their food and crops had been destroyed.

Valdivia ordered the Indians taken along as prisoners. Then he turned to his men.

The effect of this revelation upon the weary—half-starved Spaniards who had urged themselves forward for days, drawing on the last ounce of their strength, praying, trusting, believing, that here they would find their reward—was a supreme test of their courage, their faith in their leader.

The grave eyes of Pedro de Valdivia grew graver

as the Indians told their story. Ines Suarez watched him, and watched the faces of his soldiers. Many of them were veterans of too many battles to be daunted by hunger. Gerónimo de Alderete's face was no more moved than if he had been carved of stone. Captain Villagra and his men shrugged their shoulders. Santiago, the saint of the soldier, would lead them out of the wilderness once more. Francisco de Aguirre, Rodrigo de Quiroga, Juan Bohon, Alonzo de Monroy, more than half of the soldiers as well as the three priests showed by the steadfastness of their bearing that here was no obstacle to daunt them.

Not so the soldier Escobar, and a little group of those who stood near him. A murmur of discontent ran through their ranks.

"Let us turn back!" they stamped. "We are still only half through the desert. This is a miserable country at best. Let us turn back to Peru and there live in comfort."

"Stop!" The voice of Pedro de Valdivia rolled out like thunder in the mountains. "Stop! Are you soldiers? Are you men—to be defeated by the rumor of four slaves?"

"We are soldiers!" It was Ines Suarez who spoke. "We follow our chief." Whipping her sword from its scabbard, she held it above her head. "We go forward with Christ and Santiago to guard us."

"We are fools!" grumbled Escobar, and with a leer, he added, "And we are led by a woman—a *flamenca!* Come!" He turned to the group of soldiers who stood near and motioned them to follow. These seized a string of Indians bound together with rope halters about their necks and carrying scanty provisions on

their backs. Mounting their horses, the soldiers, led by Escobar, turned to go, dragging the string of Indians behind them.

The color rose to Ines Suarez' cheek. But it required no insult to his beloved to spur Pedro de Valdivia to action. His authority had been defied. A soldier in his ranks had mutinied, causing others to do likewise.

"After them!" he ordered his *maestre de campo,* and to the gunners: "Quick! Your matches. Make ready. Fire if they do not obey my order." Once more his voice rolled out like thunder: "Stop where you are!"

Escobar, looking back over his shoulder, saw the guns of the arquebusiers leveled. He halted and the others halted with him, and led by the *maestre de campo* returned to the ranks.

Valdivia signaled to Padre Rodrigo Gonzales. Then turning to Escobar he said: "Confess your sins!"

Escobar went white. "For the love of God," he begged. "Forgive me! I was mad, mad with the thirst of the desert."

"Confess your sins!" said Valdivia, and to his *maestre de campo:* "Hang him!"

A harsh murmur ran through the ranks, the murmur of bloodlust through the hearts of men. A rope was quickly produced and one end of it tied around the neck of Escobar, the other flung over the branch of a tree.

Ines, with startled eyes, drew near to Valdivia and touched him on the arm. Don Pedro put out his hand and motioned her back.

"Stand where you are," he said. "It is the law of the army. It is the punishment for mutineers."

Over the limb of the laurel tree the rope was pulled.

Four strong soldiers held it. Slowly it tautened. The head of Escobar jerked backward. His feet left the ground. His body whirled in space. The rope cut into the ashy white of his neck, grimed with the dust of the desert. A red rim appeared, paled again. His eyes protruded. A gurgle escaped from his white lips; a long windy sigh. Farther and farther from their sockets his eyes protruded. A minute passed. Two minutes.

"Forgive him!" Ines pleaded. "He is right. He was mad from the desert."

The priest murmured a prayer.

Pedro de Valdivia's hand went into the air.

"It is enough! Cut him down!" he said.

The soldiers at the end of the rope relaxed their hold. The limp form of Escobar, the mutineer, dropped to the ground; writhed a moment in agony. He gulped. The hangmen removed the rope from his neck. His eyes rolled. He breathed, struggled to his knees, and knelt, eyes rolling, before his chief.

"One condition and one only will grant you life," said Valdivia. "Depart at once and alone. Make your way back to Peru, and after that to Spain. There you will enter a monastery and become a friar. The rest of your life you can devote to God. Maybe he can make a soldier of you. I can't."

"I accept!" Escobar muttered huskily.

"Then go!" said Valdivia. For a few moments he watched while Escobar staggered away into the desert. Then, turning to his army, Valdivia said:

"See that there is no more of this nonsense in my army. If you are men of Spain you will remain steadfast in spirit. Will you fail in your duty to your King?

Will you be crushed by the hunger in your bowels? Will you go down in the chronicles of your land as cowards, frightened by the sands of the desert?"

Cries of "No, señor! No! No!" were heard on every hand.

"Then let us rest," he said. "And after a day or two days' rest, we go forward to New Toledo!"

In the thatched *ruca* of the Indians, Don Pedro de Valdivia's bed was made for the night, and there, while his army outside squatted on the river and partook of their scanty repast, he flung himself down fully clad and in full armor.

But before he slept, he said to Ines, who sat on the edge of his couch: "Wake me, my love, before the hour has passed, for I must go this night to Atacama. It is but twelve leagues distant. I must secure food for my men and provisions for my horses before these Indians have time to send warning. I will slip away after the soldiers have retired."

"Oh, my lord! My love!" she prayed. "Do not go farther this night. You are weary. You have scarcely eaten this day. Wait until morning."

"Morning will be too late," he told her. "Perhaps already the Indians have sent warning. I will take with me two trusted men. If you love me you will wake me. Do not make of me a weakling. I have had enough . . . of . . . cowardice . . . for one day. Wake . . ." His eyes were closed. He was in sound sleep before the sentence was ended; the sleep of a weary soldier.

Ines Suarez sat a moment beside him. Hearing a sound in the doorway, she turned. It was Gerónimo de Alderete.

She touched her fingers to her lips. "Sh! The *jefe* sleeps." He beckoned her to him and, going outside, he whispered:

"Sancho de Hoz has come. How, I know not. He is accompanied by one Juan Guzman, and another named Guzman, and one Avalos—all of them cowards and disturbers."

"Where are they now?" she asked.

"Sleeping," he pointed to a tent lying northward along the river.

"In which direction lies Atacama?" she asked.

"Southward, I think. Yes, southward. It is in that direction we proceed."

"It is well," said Ines. "Have no fear. Send the two lieutenants here who are to accompany the chief in search of provisions. Tell no one. Go to bed. Sleep. I will do likewise."

Ines Suarez did not go to bed. She waited until the hour had passed and the lieutenants had come softly awaiting their chief. Then she woke Don Pedro.

"It is the hour," she whispered. "Go softly. Do not wake the soldiers. It would be better they did not hear the footfall of the horses."

"You are right," he agreed. "I should be back by sunset, day after tomorrow. My *maestre de campo* has orders. As for you? You are the beloved of a conqueror."

For a moment their lips clung together. Then Valdivia slipped away in the darkness. She watched from the door of the *ruca* until the darkness swallowed him. Then she went to his bed, drew his covers tightly about her, put her saber-dagger beneath her pillow, and buried her head in the hollow that his head had made.

She did not mean to sleep but to wait and to listen. But the march through the desert had been long and though she had the heart and soul of a soldier, she had the body of a woman. Therefore, she slept. How long she slept, she could not have told, but hearing a sound in the night, a foot tripping over a stone, an exclamation in the darkness, she became at once alert.

All was darkness when she opened her eyes, yet her senses told her she was not alone in the hut. Silently and without making a sound, hardly stirring the covers, her hand slid beneath her pillow, and grasping her dagger firmly, she sat bolt upright, and speaking into the blackness, called:

"Who are you and what do you want?"

There was no answer. She repeated her question.

"We want the captain, the *jefe!*" a voice replied from the darkness.

"He is not here!" she said. "Who are you and what do you want?" Even in the darkness the gleam of her dagger could be seen.

"Señora, I am Sancho de Hoz, a soldier of the captain," came the voice.

Ines uttered an outcry. "Lights! Lights!" she called.

The cry was taken up from without. "Lights! Lights!"

"We come as friends!" the voice answered.

"As friends?" said Ines. The guards entered, bringing candles, which showed five cowering men. "You see before you five assassins," said Ines. "They are here to murder your *jefe.*"

"We are friends!" said Sancho de Hoz. "We come as friends."

"As friends!" insisted the others.

Sancho de Hoz was not so elegantly garbed as when Ines had last seen him. His velvet jacket was worn. But his lip curled with the same petulant expression.

Ines turned to Luis de Toledo, a trusted guard of the captain, who had entered with the guards bringing lights.

"Search these men," she said. "You will see then if they come as friends or as assassins in the night to murder your leader."

The guards searched, and found daggers concealed in the *borceguies* of each.

"What shall we do with them, señora?" asked Luis de Toledo. "You are chief witness against them. What is your order!"

"My order is to hold them as prisoners under guard until Don Pedro returns. He has gone this night, a weary man, twelve leagues distant to Atacama to be sure that his army shall be fed. Send a courier to him there. Tell him that Sancho de Hoz has come with a dagger concealed in his *borcegui. Adios!*" She hesitated for a moment, then turned to Sancho de Hoz:

"So!" she exclaimed with a significant drawl in her voice. "So, señor! Your little cat has caught a rat. *Adios!* Señor! Good night. Let us rest until morning. We shall need it."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SANTIAGO!

THE journey from camp to Atacama was twelve leagues—something under forty miles as one would say today—yet before his troops had finished breakfast on the third morning, Pedro de Valdivia had returned.

Dark circles rimmed his grave eyes. Deep lines furrowed his cheeks. Yet he flung himself from his horse and strode vigorously into the *ruca* where Ines was waiting.

At his entrance she rose; rushed into his arms. "You are safe, my lord! God be thanked that you have returned safely."

"I am here," he answered. His voice sagged. "We return safe, but we have brought back no food. We put some Indians to torture and secured some fodder for our horses, but though we killed them, the infidels would not divulge where they had hidden their provisions. We gave up the search, and then your message came."

"God will feed us," said Ines, her voice ringing with fervor. "You are safe. Nothing else matters."

"Safe?" he smiled. "Safe as a babe in its mother's arms." He drew her closer. "As safe and as hungry. And you?" He lifted her chin and looked deep into

her eyes. "What about you? What happened? What is this about Sancho de Hoz? What happened?"

"While you breakfast I will tell you," said Ines. She clapped her hands together. An Indian boy glided in. "Breakfast! For the *jefe!*" she ordered. The boy disappeared, was gone a few moments and returned with a bowl of lukewarm stew and some beans. The stew was made from salted llama meat. The beans were dried and toasted. But Pedro de Valdivia had been too many years a soldier and knew his commissary too well to quibble about his food.

"You have breakfasted?" he asked, before he partook of his meal.

"Long ago."

"You are thin," he said, for there were hollows in her cheeks. He offered to share his scant fare with her. She shook her head.

"We are none of us too fat," she said. "The thinner the horseman, the less burden for his horse. Ah, but we shall feast, my little *caballo* and I, when we have passed safely through the desert."

Don Pedro's eyes were somber. The lines deepened in his face.

"The end of the desert is not yet in sight. You must not go hungry. You are brave, my love, as a conqueror's lady should be, but a conqueror and his lady must eat. But, tell me—what is this about Sancho de Hoz?"

"He came last night to kill you," she said. "I knew he would come sometime."

He laughed at the seriousness of her tone.

"Sancho de Hoz is a harmless fellow," he said. "Why should he desire my life?"

"Ask him," she said. "And ask the others who came

with him. There were five of them in all. They stole in while I was asleep——"

He clutched her to him and searched her face with his eyes.

"No, they did not harm me." She read his question. "I awoke and called the guards, who brought lights and searched the intruders. They found daggers concealed in the *borcegui* of each one." She related in detail the story of the night's happenings, giving the names of the culprits: Sancho de Hoz, Juan Guzman, another of the same surname, a soldier of their own army named Avalos, and another—Antonio de Ulloa."

At the name of Ulloa, Valdivia recoiled as from a blow. "Not Don Antonio de Ulloa!" he said. "Not he, a nobleman, with a dagger in his boot. He was my soldier, my friend!" For a moment his arms dropped at his sides. Then, thrusting Ines from him, he went outside and, calling to his guard, Luis de Toledo, ordered that the prisoners be brought to him without delay

The five of them were brought, their arms bound to their sides with ropes, each man under guard: Sancho de Hoz, Antonio de Ulloa, the two Guzmans, the one named Avalos.

Luis de Toledo recounted the occurrence of the night before, confirming the story of Doña Ines. How he had been on duty outside the tent but had heard nothing, seen nothing, until Doña Ines made outcry. How he had searched them and found them armed, each with a dagger concealed between his legging and his half-boot.

Pedro de Valdivia's eyes grew hard. His face grew stern.

"What have you to say for yourselves?" he asked. "You—Don Antonio?"

Ulloa's manner was defiant. "They asked the way to your tent," he said. "I showed them. That was all."

"You—Juan Guzman?" asked Valdivia.

"I came with Sancho de Hoz—merely to join your army," whined Juan Guzman.

"So," said the chief, "to join my army you came at night, and in the dark you entered my *toldo* hoping to find me asleep." He turned to the other Guzman. "You, too, came to join my army—at night—in the dark?"

"We came as friends," said the other sullenly.

Valdivia turned to Avalos. "You, too—my friend?"

"Your friend—and soldier," said Avalos, "and small thanks—bound with ropes—treated like a robber."

Valdivia bowed in irony. "My friends and my servants, all," he said, "with daggers concealed in your buskins." Then for the first time he looked at Sancho de Hoz. "This, then, is your army," he said. "These the soldiers you promised the Marquis to engage in Peru. This is the force you bring to assist me in conquering Chile. These," he indicated the two Guzmans, "are, I presume, your horses. These," he indicated Ulloa and Avalos, "these your mules. Fifty of each you promised the Marquis to secure. These," he swept out his hand and included them all, "these are your two hundred breastplates, your two ships with its complement of men. It is thus you keep your word to your Marquis. It is thus you carry out the order of your King."

Sancho de Hoz's eyes sought the ground. His weak

knees trembled. His lips quivered. "I was mad," he said. "Mad from the march through the desert."

"I have heard that excuse before!" said the *jefe*. He turned to Pedro Gomez, his *maestre de campo*. "See that the law is carried out," he said. "Hang these prisoners, or exile them. As you like. It is no moment to me what sentence you inflict."

The two Guzmans pleaded. "Do not hang us. Let us go free. We will atone. We will atone."

Avalos whimpered like a dog. "For the love of God, do not send us again through the desert."

Gomez waited to see if Valdivia had further orders.

"Let them go as they came," said Valdivia. "If they reach Peru, they can confess to the Marquis. He will see that they take ship for Spain. There they will be received in the convent of La Rabida. Their future rests with God."

The guards cut the ropes of the prisoners. Antonio de Ulloa, fearing the desert, begged for mercy. He recounted his record as a soldier. "Have I not proved myself a loyal soldier?" he asked. "Have I not taken my share of toil and hardship? Have I not furnished funds for this adventure? When I tell you I came with these men only to show them the way, thinking they came as friends, I tell the truth."

Valdivia hesitated. He did not believe Ulloa was speaking the truth, but there was his record as a soldier; he had indeed furnished funds, had taken his share of toil and hardship. Valdivia turned to his *maestre de campo*. "I will give him one more chance," he said. "But take his sword. Keep it for a time. If when we reach our journey's end he has proved that he is entitled

to the arms of a soldier, you may return it. Until then, let him journey unarmed."

Sancho de Hoz flung himself on the ground, clutching at Valdivia's knees and begging.

"Spare me! Spare me, *excellencia,*" he pleaded. "Let me go with you on this journey. Give me my chance—only my chance to prove that I am an honorable man."

Ines Suarez, who had followed Valdivia from his tent and had waited an opportunity to speak, came forward.

"Do not trust him," she said. "He is an assassin and a coward."

Don Pedro waved her gently back.

"One more chance. One more chance," Sancho de Hoz begged. Then, fearing by the look in Valdivia's eyes that his punishment was to be exile, he prostrated himself on the ground, crawling like a snake on its belly. "For the love of God and the saints," he shrieked, "do not send me back to Spain. The King will throw me into prison. I will never come out alive. I will rot there to the end of my days."

Valdivia's eyes lighted with understanding. "So," he said, "it was for this that you plotted to kill me. That you could take my army and lead it to New Toledo, and thus win back the favor of the King."

"I confess! I confess!" said Sancho. "I am in debt to the King. I gambled away the King's fifth. He told me he would grant respite from prison if I would conquer new lands."

Valdivia shook himself free as he would shake off a dog or a rat. "Out of my sight!" he said, and turning to his guard, "Let him come with us," he said, "to learn

(Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America)

THE FOUNDATION OF SANTIAGO

A painting by the Chilean artist, Pedro Lira, the only known picture of Ines Suarez in existence.

the life of a soldier. Give him a horse to ride, that he may learn from it something of courage. Take his sword and put a sentinel beside him. Let him be watched day and night that no one converses with him. And of all things, keep him out of my sight."

This done, Valdivia whirled about and faced his army.

"Enough!" he said. "Time flies fast in the desert. Let us advance."

The cavalry leaped to their saddles. The horses nodded their heads. The infantry swung into march. The slaves took up their burdens. Pedro de Valdivia turned to Ines, who had mounted and was waiting. She dug her long-roweled spurs into her horse's flanks and the army moved forward. They did not give one backward glance at the three exiles, the two Guzmans and one Avalos, turned loose to their fate in the desert. Provisions were at a low ebb. Four months already lay behind them since they had left Cuzco and the worst of the desert lay ahead. There was no time to waste in looking backward.

Day after day they plodded. May passed and with it the autumn. The sun grew pale, creeping each day farther northward, yet moving with far more speed than the army of expedition moved southward. Through the dry borax fields they crept, then onward across a waste of red desert, ignorant that beneath that red waste lay mines of copper and of silver that would enrich the coffers of Spain. Even had they known it, they would not, could not, have paused. It is doubtful if at that time even gold would have held them. Food was now their one desire, food and sweet water in abundance.

Day after day, hour after hour, moment by moment, their supply of water and provisions drew nearer to the end. A handful of corn was a meal now, and it mattered not if it were toasted. Even the corn was not given to the soldiers until the horses were fed. Well did those Spaniards know that their lives depended on their horses, and already they had lost a number. The mares were their greatest concern. Every mare was guarded as carefully as if she were a favorite of a sultan. The stallions were counted each day. These must be kept for breeding. That was Valdivia's order. The same was true of the cocks and the hens, the best sows and the boars that were set apart for breeding. These old Pepe guarded day and night as he guarded his life.

For fear the provisions would fail entirely and they would have to fall upon the brood animals for food before their destination was reached, searching parties of ten were sent out each day to look for food in the desert. While the soldiers had life in their bodies, the breeding stock must be spared.

Night after night the searching parties returned with their hands as empty as when they went out in the morning. At last Ines said to Valdivia. "Let me go with the searchers. Perhaps a woman might succeed where men fail to find food. Surely there must be something. God has not brought us so far to let us die of starvation."

Valdivia gave his permission. Ines mounted her horse and went with the searchers. For hours they scouted far and wide, circling, returning; circling, returning again; combing every inch of the desert over which they passed. But not an oasis appeared, not a

settlement of *rucas,* not even a solitary Indian did they meet. Only a waste of desert sand with here and there a clump of cactus offering its bristly spines as an angry porcupine his quills. Hour after hour Ines repeated: "Surely there must be something." Yet hour after hour her faith was her only reward.

At sunset they turned their steps reluctantly back to the camp, retracing their course through a waste of red sand, through clumps of cactus. When they were more than halfway back Ines' horse plunged suddenly into the cactus that lay in her path. She let him have his head though the spines of the cactus scratched and tore at her ankles. In a little while the horse stopped, sniffed at the cactus plant before him and curling back his lips tore with his teeth at something. A red stream gushed from his mouth. With a cry Ines called to the soldiers near-by:

"Halt one instant!" Jumping down from her saddle, she examined the plants before her. Clinging to each spiny leaf was a spiny fruit. She plucked one spiny fruit, though the thorns sunk deep into her hands. She broke open the prickly husk. Within was juicy red fruit that tinged her hands like blood. It was this her hungry horse had eaten, the red juice streaming from his mouth. Ines followed her horse's example and bit into the heart of the fruit. It was cool and sweet.

"Be careful! Be careful, señora!" One of the soldiers, seeing her lips crimsoned, thought that, maddened with thirst, she had devoured the leaves of the cactus, that she would be poisoned.

It was not poison. It was the prickly pear—the desert fig of the Indians—the *tuna* of the desert Ines called it. The searching party tore at the plants, strip-

ping them of their fruit. The plants tore at the searchers, but the searchers had strength and hunger on their side. When they had eaten their fill, they gathered a supply for the army.

Ines returned to the tent of Pedro de Valdivia, and flinging down her saddlebags, poured their contents out before him. She selected one of the prickly pears and, removing the husk, pressed the fruit to his lips, saying:

"Flesh and blood I have brought you." He ate what she offered and pressed her lips with his that were red with the stain of the *tuna*—the life blood of the desert.

This fruit, which they now found in abundance, sustained them for days at a time. But soon there was not even the prickly pear to be found, for June came, and with it winter.

They crept now like snails—like the ghosts of snails, rather—urging themselves forward, yet conserving every ounce of their energy. They must be clear of the desert before July brought midwinter upon them. Of that they were sure. But before July came their supply of water gave out. Though snow was falling on the mountains high above their heads—for they were skirting the Cordillera Domeiko—yet no streams trickled down; they were frozen glacier-hard at the summit. It was only when the pale sun was at its zenith that there was any melting of the snows. Then for an hour or so at the most each day a thin ribbon of water dripped down the sides of the mountains. The soldiers lapped at this, taking turns, and while they were still drinking the welcome moisture, the sun faded behind the hills, the stream froze before their parched tongues.

It was one Sunday late in July, after they had passed

the twenty-sixth degree of latitude, that Ines Suarez' prayers for water were answered and the miracle occurred of which the chroniclers have written. All day the army had traveled southward. They had passed a slumbering volcano which the soldiers had named the Volcán Ines. All day they had prayed for water but no water had appeared. The priests had urged the soldiers to have faith and said that their faith would be rewarded. They had had no water to drink since early morning. Twice they had come upon shallow pools, but when they dipped in their hands to scoop up water, they found their hands covered with salt brine, the water brackish. By noonday the horses and mules were plodding with heads bobbing low, with tongues hanging dry from the sides of their parched mouths. The eyes of the Indians were glazed. The faces of the soldiers were despairing.

At sunset they struck camp. They erected a temporary altar and once more they prayed, the priests saying vespers. With dry cracked voices the soldiers sang their Hymn to the Virgin. *Salve Regina!* The song was a wail of despair.

When the prayers had ended, Ines ordered the Indians to take their shovels and dig in the spot she indicated, close to where the altar had been laid. There was no water in sight; only a waste of red sand broken by a waste of red rock. Obeying her orders, the Indians dug in the sand, throwing up a mound until they had gone to the depth of three *varas,* which is by way of saying eight feet in our language. Even while the sand was flying, a cry escaped from the Indians. The soldiers crowded around. A ring of moisture appeared in the sand. The Indians continued to dig. Ines con-

tinued to pray. So did the priests. So did even the most unworthy soldiers—Sancho de Hoz and Ulloa. The moist spot widened, water appeared, bubbling up through the sand, at first slowly, then gushing like a spring.

The soldiers laughed and prayed and gave thanks, and prayed and laughed and gave thanks again, almost in a frenzy of hysteria. They fell on their faces one by one and drank their fill. Then they filled their casks and their jars and when morning came the stream was still running. The soldiers named it the Jagüey Ines—the pool of Ines.

Thus sustained by faith and by water, they continued on their journey. But even faith and water, with now and then a handful of corn, and now and then a prickly pear, were scant sustenance for an army of nearly one hundred and seventy soldiers; scant sustenance for their horses; scant, for that matter, even for the slaves of Peru, born to a life of hardship.

How much longer the army of Pedro de Valdivia might have survived the rigors of such a journey no one knows. For, as so often happens, when the strength of man has been tried to the utmost and his spirits have reached ebbtide, they came to the end of the desert. It was toward the end of August.

Before them the Copiapó River beckoned like the finger of God. Spring had come. There was grass in abundance and trees decked with whispering leaves. The *puna* (the high desert) was far away, the low desert lay behind them. They were out of the tropics in a warm temperate zone, in the Copiapó valley, lying about four leagues inland from the sea.

It was like a glimpse of heaven—this benediction of

green grass to the eyes of the soldiers. The horses whinnied and neighed and rolled on the ground in their delight. The soldiers dismounted and gave thanks. Even the dull eyes of the Indians lighted with a faint gleam of hope. Here they could lay down their burdens. Here their travail would end. So the Indians thought. So even did the soldiers.

A cross was erected by the river. A rude altar was laid. A mass of thanksgiving was said. In the name of Christ and of Carlos the Fifth, King of Spain, Pedro de Valdivia took possession of the land, which he called New Toledo. Then they struck camp. There they would rest—would remain. So thought the soldiers. But Pedro de Valdivia thought differently, and he was their leader, their chief.

Before they had been an hour in the valley a group of Indian warriors presented themselves in the camp. Their faces were painted with horizontal stripes across their noses and mouths. They gazed in amazement at the horses and riders, calling the horsemen *Ingas* (Incas) and the horses *hueques Ingas* (Incas' llamas), believing them to be gods from another world, half horse and half man, who could unite or separate at will. Yet they did not hesitate to deceive the gods. The Indians who came were almost nude, and when they were questioned by Father Gonzales, they told him that they had nothing for which the Spaniards would care. That they had no gold. No food. No women. They pointed to the empty *rucas,* and when search was made the letter of their tale was proved true. There was no food, no gold, no women. The Indians of Copiapó had prepared for the coming of the Christian just as had the Indians of Atacama.

However, before night the hiding place of the Indian was discovered. Gerónimo de Alderete and some of the lieutenants, searching in the heart of the wood, found stores of corn, of sweet potatoes, of dry herbs and roots which grew in abundance in the valley and which the Indians had secreted against the coming of the Spaniards. They found no gold, however, but they found Indian women whose arms and necks and ankles were hung with bracelets of gold. Ropes of gold and of silver bound their heavy black hair. Their straight one-piece garments which hung from their shoulders to their ankles were spangled with beads of silver and gold.

Valdivia ordered that the stores be taken but that the Indians and their women be left unmolested, saying to Padre Gonzales: "Tell them we come as friends. If they accept our God and our King and treat us well, we shall not harm them."

With this message delivered, the conquerors rested on their arms.

Ines Suarez was radiantly happy. With hands clasped to her breast and eyes sparkling with joy, she looked out over the green valley, saying to Don Pedro:

"Here we will build a city. Here we will make a home. With a courtyard in the center. With a *chimenea* (a fireplace) for winter and for the summer a garden of flowers."

Pedro de Valdivia was silent. Then he shook his head.

"Not yet, *mi preciosa,* not yet," he said. "We must penetrate much, much farther before we can call this land our own. We have overcome the desert, that is

true. We have yet to overcome the infidel, the Indian of this land."

Ines concealed her disappointment. "You are right, Pedro *mio,*" she agreed. "We must conquer the infidel who dwells here. He must know the true Church. There must not be one hectare of land in all the world but belongs to the King of Spain. There must not be one infidel on earth who does not know the true Church."

They were the same words Ines Suarez had uttered one far-away morning in Spain, when, led by the hand of old Luz, she hurried to the *auto-da-fé.* They were the same words with which she embarked from Seville. They were the words her bishop had spoken when he blessed her as she sailed for Peru. Always her words were the same; the words by which the Christian of the sixteenth century was known, by which he proved himself a true Spaniard.

The golden pallor of her cheek was browned by the sun of the desert. Her cheeks were hollow from starvation. Her clothes were in tatters. Her shoes were worn. No longer was her glorious chestnut hair piled like an aureoled fortress on her delicate head. It was dulled by the dust of the desert; bound in two tight braids beneath her morion. But the fire of the crusader burned ever more brightly in her eyes. The passion of the zealot was deep in her voice.

"Glory to God in the Highest!" she exclaimed.

"And on earth to the King of Spain and the Indias!" Valdivia added.

"Yes," they repeated together. "We must conquer all the land."

The army echoed their words when, at the end of a

week's rest in the fertile valley, the order was passed that they must resume the march, must move as the King had commanded them to move until the whole continent from Panama to the Straits was under the dominion of Spain.

That is, the majority of the soldiers were ready to take up the march. But as is frequently the case in all great undertakings, there was a minority party of dissenters.

The minority party made itself heard at the first suggestion of an order to march deeper into the valley. They protested. Already they had come too far.

The spokesman of the dissenters was Juan Ruiz, a soldier who had never been popular in the army but who, dropping here and there a seed of rebellion, had gathered to his side a following of half a dozen men.

"Why should we go further?" Juan Ruiz muttered as the horses were being saddled. "Already we have come too far. There is nothing in this land of Chile. I have been here before. I came with Don Diego de Almagro, and was a fool to risk it again. I should have profited by experience."

Some of the adherents of Ruiz echoed his words: "Where is this fabled gold we came for?" they asked. "There is not enough gold in this whole country to line the pockets of thirty men."

A frown passed over the face of Pedro de Valdivia. A frown black as the sky before a storm.

"Enough!" he said, glowering upon Ruiz, the leader of the rebellion. "You who came for gold will find it, no doubt, in God's time, for there is gold here in abundance. But I and my loyal soldiers have come on a greater mission than to line our pockets with gold, to

turn our bellies into skin bags. We came at the order of our King, to conquer this fertile land and in the name of the Holy Church to bring every infidel to Christ."

Valdivia then addressed his army, begging the faithful to close their ears to all such words of mutiny, not only because they would be chastised severely for all such offenses, but because as men of war they had their honor to uphold, their reputation to sustain. He begged them to trust to him, their leader. Had he not brought them safely through the desert without the loss of one Spaniard by death? He promised that everything that could be done in reason he would do to further their happiness. Then, being assured of the loyalty of the majority of them, that they would follow wherever he led, he gave the order to advance.

The voice of the mutineers was silent. They advanced twelve leagues that day. They saw no signs of Indians. They rested at night. In the morning they were mounted at daylight.

Juan Ruiz was still rebellious. He grumbled and muttered to his companions while the Indian was saddling his horse. Valdivia did not hear it, but Ines Suarez did. She said nothing to the chief, however, but kept her eyes and her ears open.

Next day Juan Ruiz' mutterings had turned to open rebellion. Hardly had the army resumed its march than he remarked loudly to one of his companions: "Sancho de Hoz was a fool. He should have killed Valdivia in the desert and led the army himself. Let us go back. We are but twelve leagues from the sea. We can build a galley and go back to Peru and live in comfort."

That was Juan Ruiz' last word of dissension. Scarcely had he finished speaking when Valdivia gave the order to halt. When the march was resumed the body of Juan Ruiz hung lifeless but still warm, twisting at the end of a rope thrown across a branch of a tree. His eyes, protruding from their sockets, stared after his departing comrades. His bare toes peeped through holes in his shoes worn to tatters from the long march through the desert. He had come a long way to his fate. His mutinous voice was still. Without one backward glance, they left him.

From Copiapó the army followed the longitudinal valley that flows southward like a rich green ribbon between the Cordilleras of the Coast and the Andes. A series of valleys, rather, crossed by full flowing rivers, dotted here and there with broad prairies, intersected by transverse mountain ranges.

The valley was rich in green. Flowers dotted the prairies, flowering trees grew along the banks of broad rivers. Wild apples grew in abundance; *paltas* and other fruits were plentiful.

Pedro de Valdivia believed that the Indians were hiding in this valley, but they saw no sign of the enemy as league after league they traveled. Now and then they came upon a cluster of Indian *rucas*. Fires smoldered in the center of the floors with a little piled-up tow or dry herbs—the fuel of the Indian—giving evidence of recent habitation. But though search was made everywhere, the occupants of the *rucas* were not found.

Sometimes the rucas contained more than one fire, sometimes as many as three or four, with as many beds as there were fires, beds made of straw and covered

with the skins of *guanacos,* and with hollowed tree trunks for pillows. The number of fires and of beds indicated the number of wives the owner of the *ruca* possessed. Polygamy was common in the land of the Mapuche, and wives were bought from husband or daughters from fathers in exchange for fruits, animals, liquors.

There were no pots nor pans to be seen, only a hollowed log of cypress or laurel, where hot stones were dropped and the stew made of fish and such vegetables as were native to the climate was partially cooked with water. This was the Indian's *cazuela*—his stew—the only food he ate cooked. His meat, his fruits, his vegetables he ate as nature provided them, washing them down with highly alcoholic beverages of his own making.

Sometimes beside a hollowed stream a hollowed log canoe would be found floating, with a kind of bent twig for a fish pole. But the fisherman was nowhere in sight, nor did they find the hunter who had brought down a young *guanaco* that the soldiers found one night lying at the edge of a wood. Its legs were entangled with the *boleadores*—three stones attached to leather thongs fastened in the form of a Y. One of the Indians they had captured in Atacama explained how the Indians of Chile used these *boleadores* in hunting wild animals. Holding one stone in his hand, he whirled the other two about his head until he flung them, still whirling, to wrap themselves tightly about the feet of the fleeing animal, throwing him, fast bound, to the ground.

The Indian explained, too, how the hunter sometimes used arrows, shooting them from a bow of lithe wood a meter or so in length; how the hunter was

usually accompanied by a little dog, with small body, thin legs, a pointed muzzle and of a light drab color.

The soldiers kept a sharp lookout, but they saw neither hunter nor dog, no tribe of Mapuches to impede them. Yet the Indians impeded them nevertheless, using a method of their own.

Though the summer had come and the growing season was at hand, still there was no sign of any sowing as the army marched southward through the valley. Now and then they came upon a little settlement of *rucas* at the entrance to a deep wood, or in a thicket along the banks of a river, but no vestige of food was present. They could expect nothing in the way of provisions from the Indian along their route.

Pedro de Valdivia became vigilant. Yet in spite of his vigilance, sometimes his supplies were stolen. A strict watch was kept, but they saw no sign of intruders. Sometimes a Peruvian slave would make outcry in the night and when the sentries reached the spot from which the cry had come, they found a *yanacona* lying dead, or a dying slave child, thrust through with a lance more crude than the pike of the Spaniards and far more deadly, since its sharp point had been thrust entirely through the body of its victim.

Searching parties found only some prints of bare feet that led to the wood or the river, where the trail was invariably lost.

Still the army of Pedro de Valdivia journeyed on, intent now only on finding a place of permanent habitation. Wearied and footsore, ragged and harassed, they plodded on until they reached the valley of Aconcagua, a valley rich in soil, in vegetation, a valley protected from severe winds by the walls of two ranges of moun-

tains that flanked it on either side. Yet the richness of the valley was but feeble satisfaction to the travel-weary soldier longing to lay down his arms.

Twelve months had passed since they had set out from Cuzco with banners waving, gallantly bound for the land of gold, for conquest. Two hundred Indians had died on the way. Many of their best horses had succumbed to the hazards of the march. One of their number had been left dangling from a tree in the Copiapó valley. Three had been exiled to Spain. Two were under guard, disarmed.

They numbered now exactly one hundred and sixty-four soldiers and one woman; one hundred and sixty-four specters of soldiers, rather, and one wraith of a woman. Many who had set out proudly on horseback now walked half naked through the valley. A shirt of wool, a pair of ragged pantaloons, even a loin cloth of leather was considered abundant raiment for some. Their shoes were worn from their feet. The horse-shoes, even the extra ones which Tio Pocitos had made on the journey, were gone. Their armor was dimmed by the dust of the desert, the snows of the mountains, the rains of the valley. Their arms were corroded with rust. Still the army dragged on. They must find a hospitable settlement.

It was in the beginning of January, while they were wearily going forward that old Pepe, approaching Ines one morning, whispered in her ear.

"Señora," he said, and his voice was feeble, his face haggard and worn, "we have corn but for two days more of travel."

Ines put finger to her lips that Pedro de Valdivia might not hear and leaning from her horse she

whispered: "Two days, Pepe? We live but one at a time. If we have sufficient for today's rations, we must trust to God for tomorrow."

That night the army received its last scant ration of corn. In the morning they took up the march. Before two hours had passed they found their path through the valley blocked by a rugged rock, a solitary mountain that rose like a sentinel before them.

Valdivia gave the order to climb the mountain. "No obstacle of nature shall defeat us," he told them. He raised his sword and led the way. Ines Suarez was at his side. The army followed close upon their heels.

"Forward! With Santiago!" gasped the soldiers.

They reached the summit. A prolonged gasp of amazement issued from their throats. Above their heads arched a deep blue sky. Before them spread a valley of such fertility as their eyes had never beheld. Flowering shrubs and trees cascaded down the sides of the hills. The scent of summer bloom was in their nostrils. Pink acacia, yellow mimosa were within the reach of their arms. Below them the River Mapocho divided itself into two arms, encircling a broad, wooded valley blossoming like a garden. Little patches of Indian corn showed golden in the sunlight.

Pedro de Valdivia lifted his eyes and his sword toward heaven.

"Santiago!" he said. He turned to Ines Suarez and then to his army, saying: "Here is our gold. Here we shall build our city. This rock is our fortress. The river banks will be our walls."

"Santiago be praised!" gasped Ines.

"Cristo y Santiago!" exclaimed the soldiers. The tears streamed from their eyes. They threw them-

selves wearily upon the rocks. Their pilgrimage was ended.

Turning to Pedro de Gomez, Valdivia said: "Tomorrow you will send your men through all the valley. Convoke an assembly of Indians, but see that you do them no harm. Tell them we come as friends in the name of Christ and Santiago. Tell them that from this day forward their ruler will be Carlos the Fifth, King of Spain."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

REFUGE

"HUELEN" (Sorrow) the Indians of Chile had called the rock from which the conquerors surveyed the land of their hearts' desire. But to Ines Suarez, to Valdivia, and to the weary band that followed them up the steep sides of that solitary rock, it was a hill of promise—a refuge from whose safe height they looked down upon a scene the like of which they had long forgotten.

It was the day of Santa Lucia, the saint of light. They had passed through the desert of despair. They had followed the valley of forlorn hope. Here was peace, here refuge; a strategic location from which to command the surrounding territory.

Planting their travel-worn banner on the summit, erecting their cross, they gave thanks. They christened the rock with its new name: the Cerro Santa Lucia, the hill of the saint of light.

Below them spread a new world, a green world. Above them arched a summer sky. Gentle breezes rustled the leaves of trees. A foaming river whispered and sang over a rocky bed. A far-flung valley spread away before them, rimmed by giant mountains, their peaks clad in perpetual snow, blue glaciers nestling in their crevasses.

To Ines Suarez here was Plasencia, the beautiful—

thanks be to God and to man. Here was the home of her childhood, green, peaceful, flower-laden.

To Pedro de Valdivia it was dream of empire come true—empire guarded by a fortress rock, walled by an abundant river. Yet it was more than an empire. It was Castuera de la Serena transported to the new world. It was a vast farm, productive, potential of agricultural wealth. His fingers reached out, eager to feel the soil.

To the soldiers, it was Spain—Spain at its best—river and valley and hill and mountain. Home! Timber for their houses; endless wood for fuel to keep them warm through the mild winter; a salubrious climate; a beneficent sun; gentle breezes; comfort.

To the seeker for wealth the mountains and hills whispered of gold and silver, confirming what the Indians of Peru had said of treasure.

To old Pepe, the breeder of flocks, here was rich pasturage, an equable climate, ideal conditions for turkeys, hens, ducks.

To the three priests, Padres Rodrigo Gonzales, Juan Lobo, Diego Perez, here was rich harvest for souls. Concealed in that territory spreading away so peacefully from the foot of the Cerro Santa Lucia were millions of Indians who worshiped false gods, who must be brought to the Church.

Here was Utopia. Here golden dreams. Power for the *conquistador!* Empire for Spain! A new Kingdom for Christ! Gold for the greedy. Creature comforts for the luxurious. The promised land!

"Here we will make our home," said Ines. She gathered a handful of bell-shaped flowers, blood-red, the *copihue* of Chile. They grew all about her. They

carpeted the ground at her feet. They climbed up the trunks of trees and twined themselves in the branches. She bound the flowers in her hair and turned to Valdivia, her lord.

He agreed with her. Here they would make their home. He ordered camp to be struck at the base of the rock. The following day, while his soldiers rested, he went, and Ines went with him on horseback, to explore their new domain. They saw nothing of Indians.

"Here our world begins," said Ines.

"Our world and our work," said Valdivia with a smile. "Heretofore we have wandered. Now we must settle the land. If we are to cling to it and make it ours and our King's we must eat of the fruits of our hand. We must set about sowing."

Ines nodded. "As it was in the beginning," she murmured.

"As it was in the beginning of the world," Valdivia echoed.

That was their prayer. So, as in the beginning of the world, they set about establishing the land that today is called Chile; the city that today is called Santiago. It was indeed the beginning of a new world, a world born of the courage of two valiant souls—a man and a woman who feared nothing.

Valdivia's first act was to select a plot of ground for the sowing of seeds they had treasured through the hardships and travail of desert and mountain and valley. He who was farmer as well as conqueror knew well that his army must be fed, that the true foundation of the empire lay in its soil and not in its mines.

Forever in the saddle from early morning until the evening mist crept up the sides of the Andes and the

western sun turned the tops of the Cordillera to blood-red, he explored the territory far and wide. Forever at his side Ines Suarez rode her white charger. Day after day they explored, along the banks of the Mapocho foaming over the rocks; through dense woods, groves of laurel, cypress, beech; across broad prairies. Planning, sowing, anticipating the future, they went forever side by side. If the shadow of María Ortiz de Gaete rode between them they did not speak of it or of her. Spain was ten thousand miles away, but even had it been nearer, the trail of the polygamous Moor was too deep in its soil, the echo of the harem too loud in its halls, the day of the concubine too recent in its history, for the shadow of a wife to have loomed large between a conqueror and his mistress of that day. Here was a new world. All they had to do to make it theirs was to settle it, to conquer its natives.

There were in that day many tribes of Indians inhabiting the territory from the borders of Peru to the Straits of Magellan. Each tribe had its own name, its characteristic traits. But the great horde of Indians occupying the land from Copiapó south to the forty-second degree of latitude were known as Mapuches (natives). Of these the southernmost tribes had been given a special name by the Indians of Peru, who called them Aucas, meaning free. But their story comes later. It was to the Mapuches, the inhabitants of the central valley, that Valdivia sent his lieutenants, ordering them to assemble. Before many days had passed they answered his call.

A messenger arrived one morning before breakfast at the camp of the Spaniards. He was an Indian lad, ten or twelve years old. Brought into the presence of

Pedro de Valdivia, the boy said he had come from Michimalonco, the chief of a tribe of Mapuches. Michimalonco had sent word that the Indians were coming, were answering the call of the Christians to hold assembly with them. They would reach the banks of the Mapocho before sunrise the following morning. The boy pointed to the heavens and indicated the exact spot on the eastern horizon which the sun would reach when the Indians arrived.

Lautaro—for that was the messenger's name—was lithe and tall, well developed and well proportioned for a boy of his years. He was dressed in a garment of skins. His arms and his legs were bare. A band of silver beads was bound across his forehead, holding back his straight black hair, which fell to his shoulders.

Questioned by Padre Gonzales, the boy announced with pride that he was already a man. He could count to ten on the fingers of both hands. He held up his hands, fingers extended, to show. He knew all the measurements: the distance from the end of his thumb to the end of his forefinger, both extended; the cubit, measured from his elbow to the end of his middle finger; the foot; the pace. He was educated. He could shoot the arrow and hurl the lance. He was a man now and so considered by his tribe. He was not a member of the tribe of Michimalonco, but a *huilliche* (people of the south) who had come at the order of his *toqui*—his chief—to see what manner of people the Christians were.

He was a grave lad, serious of manner, keen and furtive of eye, distrustful and suspicious of the Spaniards into whose camp he had come. He watched, through the door of the tent, the mounted soldiers out-

PEDRO DE VALDIVIA

The statue of the conqueror that stands on Santa Lucia, in Santiago

side. He called them *Huelges-Ingas,* believing them to be strange gods, half man and half beast. He studied the wheels of the culverin drawn up before the door. He was fascinated at the turning of the wheel. He had never seen a wheel before, nor had any of the Mapuches.

Briefly and in monosyllables, yet with dignity and with that deference shown by those reared to respect their elders, the boy delivered his message. He replied to the questions of the priest. Then turning, he glided rapidly away, making no more noise than a panther.

Next morning the Indians came. The Spaniards were ready for their coming. Long before the sun had reached the position indicated by the lad, Lautaro, the Spaniards were mounted and setting off to greet their Indian callers. They made the best appearance possible. They had patched up their ragged garments, furbished their dim armor.

Ines rode with Valdivia. Her breastplate was gleaming. A morion was on her head. A chin guard protected her neck. One who did not know she was a woman would have taken her for a lithe-limbed young soldier, so straight she was, so well she rode, so firm of muscle, so clear of eye.

Gerónimo de Alderete rode also with his chief. They guarded Ines between them. About half of the army accompanied them. Valdivia had left a number of his soldiers behind him, spreading them and their tents out in such a manner that they would appear from a distance to be in far greater numbers than was actually the case.

The traveled and tattered flag of Carlos, the King,

flaunted its cross above them. The crucifix was borne by the priests. The pennons fluttered proudly.

At the point in the valley where the arms of the Mapocho converged, the two hosts met. Long before the Indians appeared around the bend in the river the hollow note of their calabash timbrels could be heard beating, warlike, through the forest.

Led by their chief, Michimalonco, an old Indian, proud and stalwart, they appeared a formidable band. A thousand, at least, against the scant seventy or eighty Spaniards who had come out to meet them, against the slender total who had come to conquer them. Slightly taller than the Spaniards, taller even than Pedro de Valdivia, who was of generous proportions for his race and his day. Broader of shoulder, also, were the Indians, more powerful, more vigorous than those who had come starving through the desert, without an ounce of surplus flesh on their bones after a year of hardship.

The Indians were dressed in skins of *guanaco* and *vicuña;* they were armed with shields and with lances, with massive bows and arrows. Their bare arms and shoulders revealed muscles of iron. Their flesh gleamed like copper. They wore headguards of leather.

With the arms of the Mapocho embracing conqueror and native, the two columns drew together. The Spaniards were haughty, arrogant, scarcely concealing their contempt for the native, their resentment at the fact that the enemy so far ouranked them in numbers.

The Indians were neither arrogant nor haughty, neither abject nor defiant. Curious, suspicious of their intruders, they were, to be sure, watching them furtively to learn whether these strange creatures, half men, half animal, were gods or devils; whether the

strange contraptions that rolled on wooden wheels were vulnerable to arrow or lance, to the deadly *macana,* or war club.

Michimalonco advanced, waited a moment without speaking, to judge whether the creatures were evil spirits come from another world to torture the Indian or whether like Armero (Diego de Almagro of whom he had heard) they were weak-kneed mortals, easily discouraged, who, finding no gold and no food, would turn back, leaving the land in peace.

Valdivia addressed him, the address being twice translated, once by Padre Gonzales who repeated the words in monosyllables to Michimalonco and by Michimalonco again, in high sounding words to his warriors.

Valdivia explained that he had come in the name of Christ, the Great Spirit who ruled the heavens; and of Carlos, the King of Spain, who ruled the earth. He had come to found an empire of Christians among them in the same manner that the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro (whom the Indians knew as Lapomocho), had founded in Peru. He assured them that he would treat them as friends and brothers if they did not resist him; but if they opposed or sought to thwart him or his army, they would be exterminated to the last Indian in Chile.

Michimalonco, an orator as well as a warrior—since among the Chilean Indians, the leader was chosen because of his eloquence and his age as well as his physical strength—answered the address of Valdivia. His voice rolled out over the valley in a flood of unintelligible words. In the best judgment of Father Gonzales they were equivocal and evasive. The Indians were

friends but not slaves. The *cacique* made that much very clear.

Ines Suarez, thinking to gain the good will of the natives by cajolery, offered gifts to the chief and his subjects. She distributed combs for their hair, shears, glass beads, little bells, leaning from her horse and presenting them to each with a smile. To Michimalonco, the *cacique,* she gave a mirror of polished metal, holding it before his face that he might see his image reflected.

The old chief was terrified at first, then pleased when he realized that it reflected his image. In return he took a plume from his headpiece and presented it to Ines. He said that the Spaniards should have many such gifts if they so desired; that it was the feather of a bird that lived in the highest volcanoes, in the mountains of perpetual snow; that neither fire nor ice could destroy it. To prove this he ordered some of the Indians to bring sticks and make fire. This they did by inserting one stick into the hollowed end of another, whirling one within the other with a rotary motion until fire appeared. Michimalonco then passed the plume through the fire. It came out unharmed. He thrust it into the icy waters of the Mapocho and handed it to Ines as dry as when he immersed it.

Ines thanked the *cacique,* and taking the plume leaned toward Pedro de Valdivia, and placed it with the plumes in his morion.

"Above his casque he wore a bonnet of colored plumes."

The gallant plumes in his helmet stirred the blood of the conqueror. Valdivia brandished his sword above his head, signified that the assembly was at an end,

ordered his soldiers to face about. The Spaniards wheeled their horses and returned to their camp. The Indians watched them for a moment; then, at signal from their leader, they too turned and disappeared into the woods.

The Spaniards were hopeful. Now that the Indians had shown no disposition to thwart them, now that they realized that the Christians had come to stay, it was time to lay out their city.

That day the first steps were taken for the building of Santiago of the New Extreme. Already in the plot of ground that Ines and Valdivia had selected wheat and oats and barley were sown. Now they planted the seeds of the grape they had brought from Peru. On sunny hillside slopes they planted the seeds of peach and nectarine. Old Pepe was given a plot. He gathered eggs for nesting. The pigs were bred. Tio Pocitos established a forge; made new horseshoes and stirrups. The mares were selected for brood. There must be young colts to break. The corn found in abundance in the valleys was gathered and stored; the same with potatoes and other tubers. Now that the Indians were peaceful, the Spaniards must lay out their empire.

The planning and laying out of a city became now the absorbing occupation of Valdivia and Ines. As a young bridegroom and his bride plan the building of a new home, these two planned the scheme of their empire the capital of which they called Santiago.

Starting from the foot of Santa Lucia, Valdivia ordered six parallel roads to be run a league or more to the west. Later these six were increased to nine. From north to south fifteen more roads were built, cutting across the first at right angles, making a checker-

board of the valley. In the center of the checkerboard, they arranged for a plaza—a place of arms—for the review of the soldiers. The plaza and some of the principal roads were to be paved with stones taken from the bed of the river. Each square of the checkerboard was cut into four equal sections—four *solares,* or lots. Each officer, each soldier in the army, was given a *solar* on which to build his house.

But before any house was built or a stone of foundation laid, the cathedral was planned. "Divine worship must not be celebrated in a hut of straw," Valdivia insisted. "The house of man may be poor but the house of God must be rich." The location given the cathedral was at the west side of the plaza with the principal door opening to the east. Valdivia himself, with many suggestions from Ines, planned the cathedral. It must have the best points of the best cathedrals in Spain. It must resemble in part the cathedral at Plasencia. One of the soldiers in his army, who had been an architect in Spain, was appointed master-builder. They drew up the plans. The edifice must be completed in three years. If the architect kept within the sum he estimated for the cost, he was to have ten thousand *pesos* as bonus. He must not neglect a fireplace, for the edifice must be warm in winter.

The cathedral was to be called the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. On the altar of the chapel, which was first erected, Valdivia placed the image of the Virgin that he had carried through the wars of Italy. Between the thumb and forefinger of her right hand, the Virgin carried a tiny stone. In the foundation of the cathedral a tiny image was cemented. It

was the image of Santiago, the saint on horseback, which Ines had worn about her neck as a child.

When the cathedral was well started, the houses of administration were begun. These, like the cathedral, faced the plaza. Flanking the cathedral on either side were the parish house for the priests and the cabildo with its accompanying *cárcel,* or jail. Across the square were the houses of government. Here the chief *conquistadores* were established, the higher officers in the army; Gerónimo de Alderete, Alonzo de Monroy, Francisco de Villagra, Juan Bohon.

The central house was the home of Pedro de Valdivia. In this house Ines Suarez lived, sharing his table, and his bed, if the testimony of his companions is to be believed.

The cathedral and the *cabildo,* the government houses and the jail, were constructed partly of stone and partly of adobe bricks and cement after the manner of houses in Spain.

The houses of the soldiers were low, one story to three at the utmost. They were built by the Indian slaves brought from Peru. Ines herself assisted in showing the Indians how to make the bricks of clay, packing the wet clay into wooden molds and drying them in the sun. They were the bricks she had seen old Pancho make when he repaired the walls of the courtyard in Plasencia.

Scarcely had the first foundations been laid than the Indians of the central valley of Chile manifested alarm. They began to gather into tribes. Here was concrete evidence that the Spaniards had come to stay. Sometimes the Indians came singly to watch the activ-

ities of the Spaniards. Sometimes groups of them came.

Riding through the valley one morning Pedro de Valdivia heard the hollow beat of timbrels echoing through the forest. Through a gap in the trees he could see an army of Indians led by Michimalonco, advancing along the Mapocho.

Wheeling his horse about he returned to the camp and gave the order to arm. Ines Suarez was nowhere in sight. He called her name but she did not answer. Before he could investigate further the Indians were upon them. A rain of flint arrows shot through the air and imbedded themselves in the walls of the abode houses that were rising row on row.

The Spaniards responded with a volley of musketry. It tore a gap in the advance guard of the Indians. With a wild yell the gap was filled by a squad from the rear. Another rain of arrows shot through the air. Half a dozen horses and as many Spanish riders went down.

The Spaniards charged but their horses were terrorized by the rain of arrows, by the wild yells of the natives; nevertheless, the Spaniards advanced. The arquebusiers ran forward. Stunned by the fire from the musketry, the Indians stood still but held their ground. The artillerymen dragged their culverins to a commanding height, but before they could take position, more Indians poured out of the valley. The Spaniards lost ground. For a moment it seemed that the victory might go to the Indians.

Suddenly Michimalonco, the *cacique,* lifted his face to the sky. A look of horror overspread his stern countenance. He uttered a cry. The eyes of the Indians followed his, looked upward. Without a sound

they turned and fled wildly through the forest as if the demons of hell pursued them.

Valdivia gave order to stand to. Was this some trick?—some barbarous strategy to take the Spaniard by surprise? He held his ground, waiting, momentarily expecting the enemy to turn back, reinforced, newly strengthened for the combat. But the Indians did not return.

Wondering, Valdivia turned about on his horse and looked upward, following the direction which the Indians' glance had taken.

High on the rock of Santa Lucia stood Ines Suarez, mounted on her white horse, silhouetted against the eastern sky. Standing in her stirrups with sword upraised, she appeared an heroic figure. The morning sun struck fire from her armor. An angel with a flaming sword. Seeing that the battle was over, that the Indians had fled, she descended, disappearing behind a rock on the downward trail.

Valdivia gave the order to his soldiers to pursue the fleeing Indians and bring back as prisoners any they could capture. More than a hundred of them came, frightened, cowed, subdued. When asked the reason of their sudden flight one of the Indians answered:

"The gods were with the Christians today. When we were most sure of victory we saw high above the clouds a spirit mounted on a white horse. It threw down dust in our eyes so we could not see to fight. Today the gods were with the Christians. It was not meant that the Indians should fight this day."

Ines Suarez smiled when they told her. "Yes, the gods were with the Christians today."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WARFARE

THE Spaniards made good use of the Indians they had taken prisoner. Quicker to learn than their Peruvian neighbors, the Indians of Chile were put to the building of the city. Because the Christians fed them well, they submitted, and their industry was the means of luring many of their people to do likewise.

Other Indians of the valley came to watch the work of building. Some of them made sport of dabbing in the clay, of making bricks and laying them one on top of the other. Little by little Valdivia and his companions lured them into taking active part in the work. They proved to be good workers. Lautaro, the lad who had first come as a messenger from Michimalonco, came again, and from time to time returned and, finding that the Christians did not harm him or the others of his race who were friendly, but rather shared their food, he became a regular visitor at the camp. He continued to take great interest in the soldiers, in the rolling wheels of the culverins, in the guns of the arquebusiers, fascinated more than all by the horses.

Valdivia, thinking to take advantage of this interest, made Lautaro an equerry in his stables.

Ines questioned the wisdom of this. Was it advisable, she asked, to put this infidel in the way of know-

ing that the horses and the Spaniards who rode them were not creatures from another world, divinities half man and half animal who could unite and separate at will? In the Indians, was not ignorance an asset and knowledge a hazard—to the Spaniards?

Valdivia smiled. The boy could be used to good advantage. The Indians must learn that the Spaniards were their masters and sooner or later must be taught to work.

So Lautaro became attached to the camp of Valdivia and the Mapuches of the central valley worked at the building of the city. Peace, or the semblance of peace, lay upon the new-born land.

On February 12, 1541 (February 24 by the old Spanish calendar), the city of Santiago was founded and baptized in the name of the King. Santiago of the New Extreme it was called. A *cabildo*—a municipal government—was named; two *alcaldes,* a procurator, a secretary and six *regidores* (councilmen). Pedro de Valdivia was proclaimed Governor, not as subservient to Don Francisco Pizarro, but as representative of the King. Limits for the new territory were prescribed; from Copiapó on the north to the Straits of Magellan on the south, and on the east and west from ocean to ocean. Gerónimo de Alderete was made royal treasurer of the *cabildo.* Ines Suarez, though without official title, took an active part in all discussions, all matters of state.

Laws were made for the Indian as well as for the Spaniard. If an Indian should wound a man or a horse with arrows or with stones, his hand should be stricken off. Horses and mares were placed under municipal protection. Guards were appointed to take

the mares to the grazing grounds each morning and to bring them back at night.

Prices were fixed for tradesmen. The smith, the armorer, the tailor, the shoemaker, had a fixed set of prices written down for him. For a woman's plain gown with sleeves the price was to be four *pesos.* A velvet gown with a sash and two rows of embroidery should cost six *pesos,* no more. A swordmaker was to receive five *pesos* for sharpening a sword and making a new sheath, if he provided the material. A lance head cost fifty *centavos* to sharpen, a hoe the same.

Tradesmen began to appear among the ranks of the soldiers. Many a gentleman whose name carried a string of titles, turned armorer, swordmaker, tailor, while waiting for the harvest to ripen, for gold to be discovered.

The land of Chile was divided up amongst the conquerors, cut up into sections as one would cut a pie. Rather, it should be said, as one would cut a fowl, for the allotments of land were irregular; a river or a range of mountains served for the dividing line between two sections. Each conqueror was apportioned a given number of the Indians in his territory. Pedro de Valdivia was to have fifteen hundred Indians as slaves to do his bidding. Ines Suarez received five hundred; Gerónimo de Alderete, four hundred. The others received each his fair share.

Through the months of autumn—March, April, and May—the work of building went on. The Indians watched as they worked, looking with ever furtive, ever hopeful eye for the first sign of discouragement among the Spaniards, still doubting that the invader could be serious in his intention to remain in the land,

eager to note if preparations were being made to depart and leave the country in peace.

By the time June came, bringing the beginning of winter, most of the houses were ready. Drab monotonous streets bordered with drab monotonous houses built of mud and cane and thatched roofs of straw rose up in the heart of the cool green valley. The narrow streets were crossed with *acequias*. Through the day the sun shone warmly on the new-born city, filtering in through the sparse doors and windows. At night darkness prevailed. No one was allowed in the streets after dusk. When the curfew had sounded and the crier had gone through the streets announcing the hour and the state of the weather, each householder barred his door. No one went abroad except on official business. When darkness came a lantern was hung before each door; the light of a tallow wick filtering through its perforated sides, glowed dimly in the dark streets.

Inside the houses the furnishings were the most simple. Tables, benches, cots, chairs, were of wood, hurriedly put together. The house of Pedro de Valdivia was built partly of stone as the mansion of the Governor should be, but was furnished little more lavishly than the others. The furniture of rich native woods was carved, but crudely, for tools were scarce. The floors were strewn with mats and skins. The walls were coated with lime, and at night when lights were needed the house was lighted with small oil lanterns.

Yet to Ines Suarez and Pedro de Valdivia, her lord, her lover, it was home. It was heaven. After the rigors of a year on the march, after Peru, after the journey from Spain, the sticky-sweet heat of the tropics, after

the hardships of the camp, and the hardships of the road, here at last was sweet peace.

During the long winter evenings, when outside a disheartening drizzle of rain made a bog of the unpaved streets, these two sat side by side at their table eating their supper by the light of a tallow lamp. After the supper was cleared away by the slaves Don Pedro taught Ines how to write. He, sitting half in the shadow, she with the light of the flickering candle lighting her red-gold hair, would labor hour after hour. Never did teacher have more eager pupil. With a quill pen in her hand and some violet ink made by the Indians from the juice of wild berries, she laboriously scrawled her letters. Sometimes Padre Gonzales would come to sit with them, teaching Ines to read from his breviary, pointing out word by word and letter by letter the prayers she knew by heart. The conqueror's lady, the consort of the governor of an empire, must be a woman of culture. She must know how to read and to write; which, indeed, she did very soon. Her naturally alert mind, her intense desire for learning, aided by the keen memory frequently possessed by the untutored, combined to render Ines an apt pupil.

So passed many an evening. Then, when the curfew had sounded and Padre Gonzales had departed, when the outside lantern had been lighted and the tallow lamp snuffed out in the house, they would retire to their chamber and she who had the heart of a soldier would yield, in a rapture of giving, her carnation red lips, her warm young arms, her pale-gold voluptuous body, to her conqueror—her king.

With the first light of morning they would rise to a new day of toil. No sluggard's life was theirs. No

sluggard's life was any soldier's in that army of pioneers molding a new land.

The harvest was ready in August, and when the grain was stored Valdivia called the *cabildo* together. He must begin to search for gold. The Indians had said that some mines at Marga-Marga, between Santiago and the sea, contained much gold. He must start the work at once. They must have funds—already he had spent all of his money, together with what he had borrowed in Peru. Moreover, he must communicate with the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro. The Marquis must know what they had accomplished in Chile. He, himself, would go to the coast and start the laborers to working in the gold mines. He would superintend the building of a brig. Soon they would have communication with Peru by the sea. Soon they would have money not only for themselves but for his Majesty, the King; he would have the royal *quinto,* the fifth.

A few days after the meeting of the *cabildo,* Ines was giving orders for the saddling of Don Pedro's horse when she learned with surprise that Lautaro, the stable boy, had disappeared. She questioned some of the Mapuches. Their attitude was defiant, their statements alarming. She hurried to the *sala,* where Don Pedro was making ready for his departure to the coast.

"Pedro *mio,*" she said. "The Indian lad Lautaro has disappeared from the stables. The Mapuches have refused to work. They tell me that Michimalonco has received word from the Chief of Copiapó and he from the Chief of Atacama that Lapomocho (as they call Don Francisco Pizarro) is dead, that he has been killed

by the Christians, that the Spaniards are leaving Peru, and that we here shall soon do likewise."

Don Pedro's lips tightened. "The Marquis!" His face was anguished. Then, shaking his head, he exclaimed: "No! No! It cannot be true. The Indians lie. Don Francisco is not dead. This is some trick. Order the Mapuche who told you to go for Michimalonco. I would hear what he has to say."

Within an hour the Indian returned, but Michimalonco was not with him. Instead, he brought seven stalwart *caciques* clad in their garments of skin, the black and white robe of the chief, over their shoulders. At first they were defiant and refused to talk but after awhile repeated the story the servant had told. Michimalonco had had word from the Chief of Copiapó and he from the Chief of Atacama that Lapomocho was dead, killed by the son of Armero (Almagro). The Christians were leaving Peru. They would do the same here in Chile.

Don Pedro called his guard and ordered the *caciques* held prisoners in the *cárcel.* Then he set off for the coast, taking with him a guard of mounted men and a corps of soldiers who knew something about building; these latter to set to work on the brig. He took a number of Indians also, men and women and children, for work in the gold mines.

Ines Suarez remained in Santiago. For several weeks there was no communication between them. Then one morning Ines, from Santiago, dispatched a letter to Don Pedro. It was a crudely written letter, laboriously put together letter by letter, but it carried the information that the *cabildo* in Santiago had learned that Michimalonco, the *cacique,* was preparing the Ma-

(From an old print)

INCA SLAVES

Bringing up tribute to the conquerors of Peru.

puches for revolt. They were dividing themselves into two bands. They would attack the Christians. One section was preparing to attack at Cachapoal, the other at Santiago.

Valdivia received the letter while he was superintending the shipbuilding. He sent word back to Ines at once. No need to tell her to be brave. She was a soldier. His letter was more the letter of a general to his captain, than the lover to his mistress. Alonzo de Monroy should take charge of the defense at Santiago. They were to guard the provisions at all hazards. Valdivia himself would depart at once for Cachapoal, taking with him his horsemen and gunners to chastise the rebels. He was warning the workers on the ship and the laborers in the mine that they must go about with care, that they must be always well armed.

Twelve hours after that letter was dispatched Valdivia left Con-Con for Cachapoal. Hardly had he departed than the Indians, who had spied on his movements, attacked the workers at Con-Con, killed the Spaniards who were building the ship, killed every worker in the mines, destroyed the work that had been accomplished, and continued the movement of revolt throughout the valley and toward the south.

Valdivia, reaching Cachapoal, found but few rebels. These he killed and, judging from the scarcity in numbers of the Indians in that region that they were massing for attack on Santiago, he marshaled his forces and set his face toward home.

But he was twenty-fours hours too late.

At three o'clock in the morning of the previous day—September 11, 1541—Michimalonco had sent his messenger to the Spaniards in Santiago telling them

that he was descending upon them at daylight, that he would leave no Spaniard living, nor a house standing in the new-born city when the sun went down that night.

Alonzo de Monroy took the messenger prisoner, but Michimalonco did not wait for daylight. With the skill and cunning of the aborigine he had planned the attack. He knew that Valdivia was absent, that the defenders of the city were few. He knew that the houses were built partly of wood and that the roofs were thatched with straw. He knew that such houses burn quickly. Burning brands thrown over the walls would make quick work for the Indian. The Spaniards would have to flee from their defenses and fight in the open plain.

The only adversary that Michimalonco feared was the spirit on the white horse who had appeared from the sky and routed the Indians in the former battle. Therefore, when his messenger did not return, he sent his spies ahead to creep up on the Christians and bring back word whether such a spirit was in sight.

The spies, crawling like snakes along the river bank, were detected and captured by the Spaniards. Long before daylight Captain Monroy had concealed his army behind his defenses. He had prepared to the best of his ability, but his army was pitifully small: thirty horsemen in all, ten more in infantry, Ines de Suarez—a woman, Juan Lobo, a priest, two sentinels guarding the prisoners—the Indian *caciques* in the *cárcel,* an army numbering less than fifty Christians against a horde of barbarous natives!

At sight of the spies crawling on their bellies along the river bank, the Spanish gunners opened fire. The

scream of a thousand Indians—the war cry of the native—rang through the air. With a fury indescribable, the Indian assaulted. A rain of arrows descended upon the Spaniards. Deadly lances were hurled across the walls.

The gunners, behind their defenses, tore a wide hole in the front ranks of the Indians. Instantly the gap was filled. Burning brands fell inside the walls.

Alonzo Monroy gave the order to charge. Out through the walls of the city the thirty horsemen dashed, lances in hand, fifteen abreast, between them the gunners. A volley of pebbles fired from the mouths of the arquebuses mowed down the Indian bowmen.

Ines Suarez, mounted on her white horse, followed the horsemen. She wore a coat of mail and a helmet. An elkhide cloak covered her shoulders.

"Cristo y Santiago!" she cried. "Santiago and the King! What is a horde of infidels to a band of valiant Spaniards, be they but a handful?"

A Spaniard lay unhorsed and bleeding on the ground. She flung herself from her horse and dropped beside him. His head was crushed with the morion still upon it. The deadly *macana* of the Indian had done its work. Another soldier lay near, struggling to rise, his horse dead beside him. She recognized the soldier. He was Gil Gonzales de Avila. She knew him well. He was a loyal supporter of Valdivia. She tore the sleeves from her cloak and bound up his wound. She helped him to rise to his feet, offered him her horse; but he was too weak to mount. Dropping to the ground, she made a stepping block of her body. She signaled to the soldier to mount by her aid. Gil Gonzales winced, but she insisted, and climbing with his

knees on her back, he pulled himself to the saddle. Her horse with its rider leaped forward.

"Cristo y Santiago!" she cried as they disappeared into the thick of the battle.

A footman shot past her. He was garbed in clerical robes. His crucifix was at his side. The pike in his hand was bloody. It was Juan Lobo, the priest, who went dealing death to the enemy as a wolf (*lobo*) deals death in a sheepfold.

"Christ and our Sainted Mother," he shouted. "Close, Spain! The Lord is with the Christian."

For hours the battle raged. At midday fresh reinforcements of Indians appeared. But Alonzo Monroy, never pausing in the fight, urged his comrades with words of courage. The bravery of the Spaniards never faltered. The fury of the Indians never waned. Now the victory appeared for the Indians. Now the Spaniards triumphed. Inch by inch the ground was gained; was lost; gained again. Now the Spaniards held the city; now the Indians threatened it, drawing nearer and nearer. A river of blood ran pitilessly.

Ines Suarez remained in the thick of the battle: under the feet of the soldiers, under the feet of the horses. She bound up the wounds of the Spaniards. She bound the wounds of the horses.

Daylight waned. The afterglow of sunset painted the mountains blood-red. The hordes of Indians had driven the Spaniards back within the walls of the city. They hurled burning brands over the walls. The buildings were a mass of flames.

"Save! Save the city!" pleaded Ines Suarez. "Save the city that Pedro de Valdivia has built!"

The details of the battle are confused in the annals

of that day. But on some points all chroniclers agree. Hardly had the Indians driven the Spaniards back within the walls of Santiago than a loud barbarian cry rang out upon the air. It was the wail of the seven *caciques* imprisoned in the *cárcel,* calling to their people to save them. The roof of the *cárcel* was burning.

"Ai-Ai-Ai—i—i—i!" wailed the *caciques.*

Ines Suarez heard the cry. Darting to the *cárcel,* she called to the sentinels who guarded it: "Open!"

The guards obeyed her order. They flung open the doors of the jail. The seven *caciques* rushed out through the open door. They were bound together with a rope halter.

"Ai-ai-ai—i—i—i!" they shrieked.

"Kill them!" Ines commanded, addressing the guards. "Kill them!"

She turned to Hernando de la Torre, one of the guards. He was quaking with fear.

"Kill them!" she ordered again. "Kill them!"

"How, señora? How?" he asked, his voice trembling. "How shall I kill them. In what manner?"

Ines turned on the guard, disgust written upon her face. She unsheathed her sword from its scabbard. She brandished it above her head. "In this manner!" she said. "And this! And this!" striking at the necks of the *caciques.* One by one she killed them, severing their heads from their bodies.

"And now," she said to the guards who stood petrified with amazement, "throw these heads over the wall that they may be seen by their infidel companions."

With dripping sword in her hand, she awaited the carrying out of her order as if—so said one of the

chroniclers—as if she were a Roldán or the Cid Ruy Diaz.

One by one the gory heads were flung over the ramparts. A wail of terror, of anguish, escaped from the lips of the barbarians as one by one the heads of their *caciques* fell among them.

The Mapuches fell back in disorder, turned on their heels, and sought escape in flight. The Spaniards pursued them, worrying them with their lances, for they had no ammunition left. Many of the Indians permitted themselves to be taken prisoner.

When satisfied that the Indians had been routed, Monroy called an end to the battle, but whatever of triumph was felt by the weary Spaniards was of short life.

Santiago was in ruins. Their new-born city was in flames. No need to order it evacuated. The Spaniards were glad to escape.

Ines Suarez, fleeing the fury of the flames, stumbled over a dead body. It was old Pepe. His face was blackened with smoke. She touched his brow. It was cold. Something fluttered in his hands. Ines looked closer. A live cock and a hen were clutched in his death grasp.

In a little while Ines passed out from the gates of the burning city, driving ahead of her a sow and a boar and a little suckling pig. In her arms were the cock and the hen released from old Pepe's death grasp. In her hands was her saddlebag, containing a few handfuls of wheat.

The sow and the boar and the suckling pig, the cock, the hen, and the handful of wheat, were all that remained of the city that once had been Santiago.

Twenty-four hours later Pedro de Valdivia returned from Cachopoal. They told him the results of the battle. Thousands of the enemy had been killed. Four Spanish soldiers were dead. Twenty horses were missing. As for the city of Santiago, he could see the ruins with his own eyes. Part, at least, of the Mapuches' threat had been kept. Not a house was left standing in Santiago. Even the acts of the *cabildo* were destroyed.

Ines Suarez showed him the three swine she had rescued, the cock and the hen that old Pepe had saved.

"And that is all?" asked Valdivia. "Nothing more?"

"A handful of wheat," she said. "Only that," and brought her saddlebag that he might see with his own eyes.

"It is enough," he said. "You are safe. With this salvage we shall start anew." He turned to his soldiers.

"You do honor to the King of Spain," he said. "Now does the war begin in earnest."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TOIL

FORTUNATELY for the Spaniards, it was September when Santiago was destroyed; and September in that clime is spring.

Ines and Valdivia looked at the two handfuls of wheat. Then they looked at the smoldering city.

"The toils of war men can bear," said Valdivia, "since it is the soldier's boast to die fighting; but if hunger is added to war, they must be more than human to bear it."

"We must sow at once," was her answer. It was the only answer. Even the most impractical soldier in all that army of impracticals who surveyed the ruin of their hopes that morning after the battle knew that they must feed themselves.

Therefore, since it was September, they set about sowing at once. The army was divided into two groups. There were no tools, but in the smoldering ruins they found the remnants of their hoes and their shovels. With these crudely repaired, and with the aid of pointed sticks, they dug. With sharp-edged rocks bound to the branches of trees, they plowed. Men who had been born to the purple now put their hands to the plow. Some kept guard while others sowed. It did not take long to sow two handfuls of wheat, but

the guarding took long. One night one half of the army kept vigil, the next night the other half. All night long thirty or forty armed men moved eight or ten leagues around the camp, the grazing fields and the sown ground, while Valdivia with a squad of gunners broke up the bands of Indians who harried them on every side.

Ines sowed and plowed and dug with the hardiest of the men, and took her turn at guard. There was work enough for all. Between sowing and guarding they rebuilt their city. With the help of the Indians brought from Peru who remained loyal to the Spaniards and with the captured Mapuches impressed into service, the houses were rebuilt, more simply, more hastily, than before.

Foraging parties went skirmishing for food. At the risk of their lives they searched and found maize that the Mapuches had hidden in the mountains, and fodder for their horses. Facing death, they dug in the ground for potatoes and roots, eating them raw in their hunger.

A fine drizzle of rain fell through September and October. The hearts of the Spaniards rejoiced. The fine rain would aid the wheat without washing the precious seeds from the ground. By the beginning of October the sun was warm. Day after day Ines watched the sown ground, greedily, fiercely watching for the seed to sprout.

One morning she came to Valdivia. The anxious look was gone from her face. She smiled.

"It grows!" she exclaimed. "It grows!" The thin sprouts of green had appeared above the soil. The wheat was growing. Together they knelt and offered up a prayer of thanksgiving. It was a day for rejoicing.

Yet before the day had ended their joy had turned to alarm. The Indians, too, had seen the growing wheat.

From that day forward the Indians increased their warfare. They tried by every means to destroy the growing crops. They who had refused to sow lest the Christians should profit by it, who had maintained life by accepting what nature offered—roots in the ground, the seed of a small oatlike plant—now came skulking in the dark determined to destroy the food and drive the Christians from their midst.

If Ines Suarez lost hope during those months of starvation, there is no record of it. Her clothes, like the clothes of every soldier, were in tatters. Like theirs, her cheeks were wan, her lips pale, her eyes hollow. She had no meat. A handful of corn was a meal, or a few roots dug from the ground. A cluster of wild strawberries, gathered in the desperation of starvation while keeping the enemy at bay, was rich manna from heaven.

In this manner they lived until December, when twelve *fanegas* of wheat (about twenty-one bushels) were harvested from the two handfuls that had been sown. With this they had to feed themselves, their horses and their slaves, and keep enough for seed. There was ghastly truth in the letter that Valdivia wrote to his King: "The Christian who got fifty grains of maize a day thought himself well off; and he who had a handful of wheat did not winnow it to take away the husks."

When the Indians saw that in despite of their efforts, the Spaniards had reaped a harvest and were not to be driven away by starvation, they took to killing the slave women and children. Many of these slaves had been

taken into the homes of the Spaniard, had answered the soldier's desire for woman. In the veins of many of the children ran blue Spanish blood. The soldiers redoubled their vigilance. The horses were kept saddled all day and most of them all night. The soldiers were never unarmed. All night they slept in full armor, if they slept at all; such rest as they got being snatched between watches.

One morning in January Ines, frightened by the haggard face of Valdivia, whose constitution had seemed of iron, exclaimed:

"*Santa María!* You are a wraith, a ghost, my lord."

"I am no more ghost than you, *querida,*" he said. "No more ghost than any soldier. We are sustained by our faith. We must go forward like followers of Christ. We must possess this land until every hectare belongs to us and to our King."

"We can neither go forward nor remain long where we are unless help comes," Ines told him.

"Help?" Valdivia flung out his arms. "If it comes not from God," he said with resignation, "we can look for it from no other quarter. No sane soldier in Peru would stir himself to come to these parts, owing to its evil name."

"Yet there must be soldiers in Peru who are dissatisfied with the rewards they have received. Could not someone go to Peru, taking gold to hire such men and bring them here with provisions. Could I not go?" she asked.

Valdivia smiled as he would smile at the whim of a child.

"You would die in the desert," he said, "and so would the most stalwart Spaniard in the army. Here-

tofore no small body of men has been able to pass safely through the desert. I would ask no such risk of any soldier."

While they were talking, Alonzo de Monroy came up to report to his chief. No sooner had he come and been taken into the conversation than he said:

"No, my *jefe,* you would ask no such risk of any man, but we must have help and that quickly. Give me five men and a horse for each and I will go. But I must have money with which to hire men and buy provisions. I have a few thousand *pesos* only, but such as it is it is yours and my King's."

"You are rich!" said Valdivia with a smile. "I have nothing. So far, I have spent in this campaign the one hundred and ten thousand *pesos* that I begged and borrowed in Peru. It is the last. If I get more I must beg it of my soldiers, who have little, or pledge my notes with such friends as I have remaining in Peru."

Ines did not pause to hear more of the conversation. Hurriedly she left the two men talking together and sought Padre Gonzales. She told him of the offer made by Alonzo de Monroy to take five soldiers with him and go through the desert to Peru if money could be found for the purchase of provisions and the hiring of men. Together they planned—Ines and the *padre.* He would call his people to the church. One half of the soldiers could come while the other half stood guard. He would preach a sermon to them, telling them of the need for help and for money. While he addressed the one half, Ines could go among the others, demanding what money they possessed in the name of their own safety. Some of them still had funds which they had brought from Peru. It would

do them small good if the Indians killed them. Better trust it to Alonzo de Monroy and the desert.

The plan succeeded. Those who did not yield to the pleas of the man of God listened to the voice of woman. They did not all give gladly, but in the end they gave. Some of the money came from the slave women who had got it from the Spaniards. In all they gathered eight or ten thousand *pesos*. They turned it over to Valdivia, who in turn delivered it into the custody of Alonzo de Monroy to go by the desert to Peru and bring help in the form of men and provisions.

"And wine for the altar," counseled Padre Gonzales. "Owing to the lack of wine, communion has not been offered in five months. It is not good that Christians should remain so long without the solace of the blessed sacrament."

The money in hand, Valdivia ordered Tio Pocitos to make six pairs of wooden stirrups for the horses. From the iron ones already in use, together with some scraps found in the wreckage of the burned city, he made shoes—an extra set for each horse, and for each rider a bag containing a hundred nails. He also made two iron vessels for the men to drink from. With these and the money and with the blessing of those who remained behind, the six men set off, headed by Monroy. Valdivia gave them strict orders that they should always be on their guard for lurking danger and never for one moment, day or night, let their vigilance wane.

After the emissaries had gone, the soldiers who remained made ready for the attack they felt sure the Indians would make before help came. It was January, 1542, when Monroy and the five men departed.

They could not look for his return under a year. Seven months at best would be required for the journey through the desert, a month at least in Peru, three to five months' return by the sea in case a ship should be secured. Those who waited must prepare for a long siege.

They built a wall one and a half *estados* high (a trifle more than five feet) and sixteen hundred feet square. Every soldier assisted in the task. Ines and Valdivia made bricks of clay, taking their turn with the soldiers, their swords always at their sides. Breathlessly they worked. Not one moment's pause was allowed, day or night, until the wall was finished.

Scarcely was it finished when the Indians attacked. But the Spaniards and their baggage were safe behind the wall, footmen and gunners defending it while the horsemen defended the sown ground. They drove off the natives, but other attacks were made. All winter long the Spaniards were forced many times to defend themselves and their scanty stores. Seven months passed, and yet no word from Monroy. Thirty or forty men rode constantly around the plain. When the food that they took with them was exhausted, they returned to the town and other soldiers went out in their places. And so, as Valdivia wrote in his account for his King: they went about like ghosts, and the Indians called them *cupais*—which was the name they gave to their devils—for whenever they came to attack they found the Christians awake and armed, and most of the time on horseback.

With another December God was good and nature bountiful. Thousands of *fanegas* of wheat and quantities of maize were stored. From the three pigs saved

when Santiago was burned many porkers had been produced. Old Pepe was gone, but the hen and the cock he had died saving had multiplied like the blades of wheat. The army now had meat, fowl, and eggs, though they used all sparingly. They had corn and grain for their stock. They grew impatient. They were eager to penetrate farther south. But they knew that before they could attempt further conquest they must have more men, more horses. The stock of gunpowder that Valdivia had brought back from Con-Con when he returned to find Santiago in ruins was well-nigh depleted. Still no word from Monroy.

Valdivia chafed with impatience. Ines soothed him, encouraged him, taught him woman's patience.

"If I could only start the building of another ship!" he said, "but the building of a ship requires tools and money." He to whom inaction was torture paced the land with impatience.

Gerónimo de Alderete offered to risk the journey, to follow in the footsteps of Monroy and learn if evil had befallen him.

"The desert has taken toll enough," Valdivia answered.

But the desert had not taken toll of Alonzo de Monroy.

In September, 1543, Valdivia yielded to the entreaties of Alderete to let him go to the coast to search for trace of Monroy. Before the month was ended Alderete sent back word that a ship had been sighted coming from the north.

Great was the rejoicing in Santiago. The soldiers cheered. For the first time in many months they sang: *"Titiri! Titiri! Titina! Somos la jacarandina."* Ines

Suarez fell upon her knees. Tears rained from her eyes.

It was not Alonzo de Monroy, however, who came in that ship, though the vessel brought news of him. Monroy had reached Peru with one soldier. The others had been killed by the Indians in the desert. Reaching Peru, however, Monroy obtained the help he sought. One Lucas Martinez Vegazo, who had been made rich in Los Reyes, had sent the ship to his former companion and friend, Don Pedro de Valdivia. It was not a great ship—only a brig—but it was loaded with arms, with ironware, with clothes, with vestments, with wine—for beverage and for the sacrament. Once more the conquerors were dressed as decent men-of-arms. Once more Valdivia, who loved fine clothes for himself and for those around him—had white starched ruffs for his neck and wrists; had coats and pantaloons all of one piece, instead of bundles of rags. Once more Ines Suarez dressed in the garb of a lady. Skirts with ruffled flounces worn under a *faldellín,* velvet basques, lace mantles to cover her head at mass.

Monroy, so the officers of the ship reported, was coming overland by the coast route from Peru. Two months later he arrived. With him came seventy men and horses, the gift of one Cristóbal de Escobar and a priest in Peru named Gonzalianez. Monroy brought more good news. Two additional ships were coming to Valdivia's aid. He and his men might have come in them but they felt the steeds too precious to be entrusted to the treacherous ocean, with its winds blowing constantly from the south.

Monroy told of his journey by the desert to Peru. The Indians of the Copiapó valley had set upon them

three months after they took their departure, and had taken their gold and dispatches. Four of his companions had been killed. He, with the other, had been taken prisoner. It was only after two agonizing months that he had found his chance, had stabbed the *cacique* to death and escaped with his companion and their horses.

He brought sad news from Peru, though. It was all too true, what the Indians had said long ago about the death of Don Francisco Pizarro. The Marquis was gone. He had been set upon by assassins and killed by the son of Don Diego de Almagro on Sunday, June 26, 1541, a few months after Valdivia had founded the city of Santiago. Almagro, in turn, had been beheaded later in Cuzco, in the same plaza where they had slain his father. There was a new ruler in Peru, one Vaca de Castro, who had sent word to Valdivia that the King of Spain was in need of money and would appreciate his *quintos* from Chile. The King of France had made an alliance with the Turks and had sent armies in various places against his Majesty, Carlos Fifth. His Highness was in need of funds to prosecute his wars.

This message came as a shock to Valdivia. He bowed his head at the news. "Don Francisco! The Marquis!" he said. "My friend and my comrade." He thought long about the mention of the *quintos*. "I would look upon it as salvation," he told Ines, "if I could find in this land two or three hundred thousand *castellanos* for his Majesty's service; to meet such just, such heavy, and such holy outlays. And by God's help," he added, "I will do it soon."

Ines, too, was distressed over the news of the death of the Marquis; yet more distressed over the news that

the King needed funds and that there were none in Chile to send him.

"The King's call must be served," she said. "We have been in this land three years now and have not remitted one *castellano* to his Majesty. It will place us in a bad light. It will appear that we have discovered a worthless country." Then she recalled to Valdivia that he was ruler in name only; that although the *cabildo* had appointed him Governor of Chile he had received no appointment from his King, no confirmation of the office. They must have gold to send to the King. They must reopen the mines at Marga-Marga.

They discussed the question at much length. They must set the washers to work again in the mines. Surely there must be much gold there else the Indians would not have destroyed the work of the Spaniards.

"There is probably gold in the rubbish the Indians have discarded," said Ines. "If they are as wasteful in their mining as in their planting, they have thrown away much valuable gold."

Valdivia smiled.

"You may smile," said Ines, "but your smile would be happier if you found that my words were true. Let me superintend the work of the mines. You will soon see whether I am wrong or right. When you have your *quintos* for his Majesty, he will reward you with your appointment as ruler."

Valdivia felt there was truth in what Ines said, but they must wait. The soldiers must rest. Monroy and the men who came with him were worn from the journey. They with their horses had arrived in a weakened state. From the border of Peru to Santiago they

had not met one peaceful Indian. They had suffered hunger—and the thirst of the desert which was worse than hunger. For the Indians commanded all the water holes.

After the arrival of Monroy, however, the Indians were quiet for a time. They had seen the fresh men and horses arrive from Peru. They knew that a ship had come with provisions and with ammunition. They retired to the province of Promocaes, four or five leagues distant. Then in a little while they began sending messengers daily, bidding the Christians to come and fight them and to bring along those who had lately arrived. "Let us see if those who have just come are as brave as the first ones," was the substance of their messages.

Valdivia ignored them for a time. He was waiting the arrival of the two ships which Monroy had told him were coming to his aid from Peru. One was to be provisioned by four men who wished Valdivia well. The other was to be captained by a Genoese, the pilot-general of the South Seas for the royal *audiencia* at Panama and was being sent under order of Vaca de Castro, Governor-General of Peru.

When April came and five months had passed since Monroy's return without word of any ship, the Spaniards could wait no longer. They must meet the challenge of the Indians. Taking Monroy and the men who had come with him, all well equipped and well horsed, Valdivia prepared to set out. Before all was ready, however, four specters appeared before him, three gaunt Spaniards and a negro as haggard as they. These were all that remained of the crew that had set out from Callao in the ship provisioned by four men

of whom Monroy had spoken. They had put in for fresh water at Copiapó and there had been tricked by Indians who had taken possession of their vessel, had killed the master and the crew, and had set off, towing the vessel southward. These four had escaped under cover of nightfall and had come half starved through the valley.

With this news Valdivia sent a company of men to chastise the Indians at Copiapó, while he with Monroy and the fresh men went southward to answer the challenges that had been made. He figured that the Indians of Copiapó, knowing that the tribes in the south had burned their farms, had stolen the ship of the Spaniards to trade with their neighbors to the south for the provisions it carried.

Ines and Valdivia led the company of soldiers southward. For the first fifty leagues they traveled without seeing one Indian. Every stronghold was deserted, every village was burned, every crop destroyed. They marched through a valley more fertile than any they had yet seen, richer than anything in Spain. Yet this agricultural treasury was bare as a desert of human habitation, bare of crops, of food, of natives. They penetrated as far south as the River Maule, but everywhere it was the same. Not one Indian was in sight.

From evidence on every hand they knew the land to be thickly populated. They continued on toward the coast. There they found a good harbor and ten leagues farther up the coast they found the hulk of a ship burned to the water's edge. It was the ship they had awaited, the ship from Peru that the Copiapó Indians had stolen. The natives had brought it thus

far and distributed its cargo of provisions among these hidden tribes, no doubt.

It was June, and the winter was upon them; the worst winter they had experienced in the new world; the worst winter—so the Indians said afterward—that Chile had ever known. Rain fell in torrents, making a bog of the roads. Rocks and trees washed down from the mountainsides, blocking their passage on every hand. Cold set in, cold that chilled them to the marrow of their bones. No use to proceed against the Indians in such a season. The hardy natives, well provisioned, would await the spring before engaging in warfare.

Leaving Francisco de Aguirre to guard the River Maule, with sufficient men to aid in skirmishing, the others retraced their steps to Santiago, their base. There with roofs to cover them they would await the spring.

When they reached Santiago they found the city rejoicing. The second ship had come! It had reached the harbor of Valparaiso! Its captain was Bautista de Pastene, the Genoese of whom Monroy had spoken. The ship was his own and with the consent of Vaca de Castro he had brought it, stocked with provisions, to the aid of the conquerors. The conquerors must, of course, pay for the cargo, since the ship was privately owned. The government gave nothing, whether in Peru or Spain.

It was August and the rage of the winter was over by the time Valdivia had secured sufficient funds to pay for the cargo; eighty thousand *castellanos,* gathered by the grace of God—in loans, in jewels, in promissory notes, in collateral. He hurried to the coast. He had the cargo unloaded and pausing only to learn that

Captain Pastene was a skilled navigator, Valdivia appointed him captain-general of the sea and sent him off, post-haste, to explore the coast as far as the Straits of Magellan; to bring back knowledge of the land and some Indians who could be used as interpreters.

"Now indeed I am a ruler," said Valdivia to Ines. "I have an army. I have a captain-general on the sea." He said it in jest, but Ines was serious.

"You will be a ruler when the King has appointed you," said Ines. "If we only had gold to send the *quintos* to his Majesty, your appointment would be confirmed, I am sure. Let me take charge of the gold mines while you lead the army," she said.

Valdivia demurred. "It is too cold to work the mines," he said. "Already we have lost too many slaves by exposure. We must conquer more Indians; we must have more slaves to lose."

Before two months had passed Bautista de Pastene was back with his ship. He had acquired much knowledge. He had seen a rich land, thickly inhabited, as far south as forty-five degrees, after that sparsely. The maps made in Spain were all wrong, as far as the Straits were concerned. The Straits were much narrower than they said. Pastene gave a glowing description of the land he had seen from the coast. It was rich in agricultural wealth; no doubt, it was rich in mines. It was abundant in livestock; the wool of the sheep was so long it dragged on the ground. But it was densely populated with Indians. He brought back some of the natives to act as interpreters and to show what manner of creature they were.

If any doubt had existed in the minds of the conquerors as to the strength of the Araucanians—as they

called the natives south of the Bio-Bio River—it was dispelled by the sight of those who came surlily to shore from Captain Pastene's ship. They were bound and shackled, but they looked no less the warriors. Taller than the Indians of the central valley, broader of chest, more powerful, their skins a light coppery bronze, heads bulky, foreheads flat, cheek bones pronounced. Their eyes were black and keen, their lips were thick, their teeth exceedingly white. They had red and black lines painted horizontally across their faces. Their whole manner was fierce and warlike.

"I have taken possession of the coast as far as the Straits of Magellan in the name of Christ and the King," said Captain Pastene. "You may write to his Majesty and tell him that the whole of America del Sur is yours."

Valdivia regarded the Indians whom Pastene had brought back as samples of the tribes to the south. His eyes were grave.

"The land will be ours," he said, "only when we have conquered these warriors. At present we number but a trifle more than two hundred Spaniards, and for every Spaniard there are a thousand warlike Indians. We need more men."

"We need gold," said Ines. "We must begin to work the mines."

"We could send a ship to Spain by way of the Straits," Pastene suggested.

"If it is the King's wish," said Valdivia. "I will write a letter and ask what is his Majesty's wish. If he desires a ship to go to Spain by the Straits, it shall be done."

"We must have gold!" Ines continued to repeat,

and because Valdivia acceded to her every wish, that day Ines Suarez led an expedition of workers to the mines of Marga-Marga; thirteen Spaniards with five hundred of the Indians brought from Peru. Nine months they searched for gold in the rubbish the Indians had discarded when they were forced to abandon the mines, in the bed of the Quilpué River, in the icy stream that cascaded from the mountains above their heads. Standing knee-deep in the icy bed, sluicing the water in troughs made from sections of logs, they strained the precious stream that came through veins of gold ore, searching for the bright bits of coveted gold.

Week by week Ines traveled back and forth from Santiago, convoying food to the workers in the mines, returning with gold gathered bit by bit. To and fro along the road that led up hill and down dale and over the toilsome trails cut into the sides of the mountains, until her horse's feet wore a path between the mines and the city twelve leagues apart, bearing food that had been sown by her own hand and gathered by her own labor that the workers in the mines might be fed. Many of those workers were Indian women and children, slave women brought from Peru, the concubines of the Spaniards, their children the life blood of the Christians. Yet they were slaves. As indeed all were slaves in that day, slaves of greed, slaves of the Church, slaves of Charles the Fifth, their King.

In nine months from the time the work on the mines started, Ines Suarez, by the help of infidel and Christian, had gathered sixty thousand *castellanos* of gold.

"Now," she said, as she placed it proudly before

Pedro de Valdivia, "now indeed you begin to be a lord."

"A lord?" he said. "Rather I am a poor captain, greatly in need of men."

Yet he sent off the royal fifth to the King and with the gold he sent Alonzo de Monroy by land once more and Bautista de Pastene by sea to bring fresh supplies from Peru; more men, more horses.

When he gave the gold into their keeping—the sixty thousand *castellanos,* minus the King's fifth, Valdivia's face was grave.

"They will count it small in Peru," he said. "Yet to us in Chile, it is a fortune. Every *peso* has cost us a hundred drops of blood and two hundred of sweat. Take it, and may God guard you and it."

In the same ship with Pastene, Valdivia permitted Antonio de Ulloa to embark. He was to proceed to Peru and after that to Spain. He wished to be married there, so he said, and since he was going to Spain Valdivia entrusted to him certain dispatches to the King. He was the same Antonio de Ulloa who had accompanied Sancho de Hoz when, in the desert of Atacama, they had entered the tent of Valdivia prepared to assassinate their leader. In the five years that had passed since that night when Ines Suarez, sleeping in the bed of Valdivia, had awakened to find the intruders with daggers intended for Valdivia concealed in their *borceguies,* neither Ulloa nor Sancho de Hoz had given any trouble. On the contrary, they had given such good account of themselves that Valdivia had restored their arms and permitted them to serve in his army. Now Ulloa was going to Spain carrying dispatches for the King.

Ines Suarez did not share Valdivia's feeling of ease about Ulloa. "Do not trust him," she pleaded in alarm, when Valdivia told her his plan.

But he whose own nature was above small doing found it difficult to suspect others of treachery.

"Don Antonio is a gentleman by birth," he said. "He can do me no harm. He is going to Spain to be married, which is well. He can carry letters to the King; can apprise him of all that has taken place since our coming to this land."

"He is an assassin!" said Ines.

Valdivia shrugged his shoulders. "That was five years ago," he said. "He has grown wise with experience since then."

Ines said no more, yet in her heart she knew that it was a mistake to put faith in one who had proved himself faithless.

It was the first error in judgment that Pedro de Valdivia had made. His errors were few, but they were serious.

His next step after sending his emissaries to Peru was to prepare for the founding of a new city.

"We need a base between the Copiapó valley and Santiago," he said. So, leaving Francisco de Villagra to guard the city of Santiago, Valdivia and Ines set off for the north to establish the new city. No error in judgment there. There was an excellent harbor for ships at Coquimbo. It was halfway between Copiapó and Santiago. It would be a gateway through which soldiers might enter from Peru to aid in the conquest of Chile. The soldiers would come, of course! Both Valdivia and Ines had faith in that. Sixty thousand *castellanos* should hire and equip at least a hundred

soldiers, even in Peru, where gold was free and soldiers idle. It should do more than that. It should buy horses and ammunition.

Valdivia reached the coast at Coquimbo and founded a new city. It was named La Serena, after the city of his birth—Castuera de la Serena. He appointed a *cabildo* and a tribunal of justice. He appointed Juan Bohon as mayor. No error in judgment there. Juan Bohon was a good leader, a good soldier, a loyal friend.

This done, they returned to Santiago, pausing at Marga-Marga to see what the workers were getting from the mines. They were getting practically nothing. The mines had ceased to pan out gold.

It was February, 1546, and late summer, a good season to explore the land to the south to see what it offered in the way of mines. With sixty mounted men Valdivia and Ines set forth to explore the land south of the River Maule. So far the Indians had been conquered. They had felt the force of Spanish arms. They had rebuilt their settlements, had sown their crops. They permitted the Spaniards to pass through unmolested. So far it was an orderly invasion.

Six leagues farther on the Indians grew hostile. These were the warlike Araucanians, the fiercest fighting Indians in all South America. They barred the road, sought to prevent the Spaniards' passing. The Spaniards charged with their horses. The Indians fled. But at every turn in the road more Indians appeared, always in greater numbers. Yet the hearts of the Spaniards rejoiced.

"The greater the number, the more slaves," said Ines; "the more souls for Christ; the more subjects for the King."

At evening they made camp on the banks of a river, in the midst of trees. Tall pines tapered to the sky. Tree ferns arched overhead. Tall fuchsias dripped blue and red bells upon the shoulders of the Spaniards. It was a peaceful land. Yet far away to the east they could see two active volcanoes, their white smoke plumes floating like scarfs above their craters. Peace—with the menace of eruption always before them.

That night they did not sleep. Some of the soldiers rested on their armor, their horses saddled.

Ines and Valdivia stood for hours leaning against their saddles, watching the white plumes of smoke float upward from the volcano, the red glare of its fire tingeing the sky like blood.

Leaning thus on their saddles they conversed in low tones until a quarter after prime, three o'clock, as we would say. Almost on the hour a cry rang out through the forest, the terrorizing war cry of the Indian advancing for attack. "Ai-i-i!" The Indians were upon them. No small number this time. Seven or eight thousand, so the Spaniards said, advancing in serried squadrons. Never in all his fighting days—not in Flanders, nor Italy, not even in the Caribbees—had Pedro de Valdivia met such fierce fighters. The Spaniards were ready for them. They mowed them down with their culverins, they scattered them with musket fire, they charged them with their horses, impaling them on their lances. Still the Indians came, squadron after squadron.

Even though cased in armor, six out of the sixty Spaniards dropped, wounded by the arrows and spears of the Araucanians. Two of the horses were killed. Hardly a Christian but was wounded. Yet in the end

the Indians fled, unable to withstand the gunfire, terrorized by the horses, defeated by some mysterious power.

Suddenly as the battle began, it ended. The enemy fled. The Spaniards pursued, captured them by hundreds, forced the natives to talk, to tell why they had fled in terror.

"We could have killed the Christians," one of the *caciques* said, "but we could not kill the *huelgas* [horses] nor could we fight against the two spirits that led them; a man who fought like a demon; a woman on a white horse."

Ines and Valdivia looked at each other.

"It was *Santa María,* the Virgin, and the Apostle Santiago," she said, and made the sign of the cross on her forehead.

The Spaniards spent the remainder of the night curing their wounds and the wounds of their horses. All night long the captured Indians squatted on the ground in their corral making hideous noises. They shrieked and cried aloud, watching the clouds scudding across the sky. They were cheering their dead leaders whose spirits they believed to be in the clouds fighting the same enemy they fought on earth. For the Christians it was a night of horror.

Next day the Spaniards continued on their march. They had bodies of iron and souls of steel. They marched four leagues to the banks of a broad rushing river that flowed into the sea. The Bio-Bio, it was called by the Indians. It was an admirable position for a fort, but having surveyed the land on both sides of the river, Valdivia said:

"Beyond this river there are more Indians than leaves

on the trees. Never in all my days of warfare have I seen such fighters. They fight in squadrons like the Germans. They never tire. Their numbers seem to have no end."

"Santiago and the Virgin are with us," said Ines. "We have nothing to fear."

"Yes," said Valdivia. "Santiago and the Virgin are with us, but with the handful of Spaniards I possess it will take all the saints in the calendar and all the angels in heaven to conquer such a horde of barbarians. We will return to Santiago once more. Surely by now Pastene or Monroy will have come back with the men and the arms from Peru."

They left a sufficient number of men to hold the land already gained, and returned reluctantly back to Santiago. There was no word from Peru. They went on to La Serena. Surely, they thought, a ship must have by now reached that harbor.

There was no word at La Serena. There was no word for eleven weary months, and when that time had passed, another messenger, Juan Davalos, was sent to Peru in a pitiful little boat made for fishing and rowed with oars. He carried copies of the dispatches taken by Antonio de Ulloa, so that if evil had befallen the first, his Majesty in Spain might know that his vassals in Chile were not neglecting his work, but were seeking always to glorify him, to win him greater empire.

Thirteen months after the departure of Juan Davalos, Bautista de Pastene came back. His ship was no more than a shell, and that shell was empty. Not a *peso* of goods did he bring, not a gun, not a box of munitions.

Valdivia embraced him with joy, but his joy turned

quickly to sorrow when he heard what Pastene had to tell.

Alonzo de Monroy was dead. He had died on reaching Peru. Of the cause of his death nothing was known. He was gone. He had most of the sixty thousand *pesos* gathered with the sweat and the blood of those who sent it. By treachery Ulloa had possessed himself of the gold. As for the dispatches: he opened them, read them in the presence of his friends, and destroyed them. He made a sudden change in his plans. He determined not to go to Spain.

"How did he get possession of the money?" asked Valdivia.

"How?" repeated Pastene, shaking his head at the memory of his recent experiences. "Ask me how it has come about that God has permitted the devil to take possession of Peru. Nothing is as it was before. The whole land is in rebellion, and the leader of the rebels is Gonzalo Pizarro. Vasco de Gama is in prison. A new Viceroy, Pedro de La Gasca, has come from the King, but Pizarro has prevented him from landing or taking his seat. Confusion reigns in Peru. It was only by a miracle that I escaped with my life."

Valdivia bowed his head. For a moment despair seemed to overcome him. Twenty-seven months had elapsed since Pastene and Ulloa had departed. Chile was eighty thousand *pesos* poorer. Alonzo de Monroy —a loyal friend, a good soldier—was dead. The Indians of Chile had had twenty-seven months in which to mass for attack. It was only for a moment, however, that Valdivia's head was bowed. A moment more and he rose, clicked his spurs, and said:

"I must go! I must fight for my King. I must offer

my services to the Viceroy, Pedro de La Gasca. Gonzalo Pizarro was my friend, but he is my friend no longer. He is the enemy to my King. I must do what I can to restore order. After that I will conquer. I can command my own price in arms and men."

Ines Suarez made no mention of the warning she had given against Ulloa. She waited until her Lord had finished his speech, then said:

"Go and God go with you"; adding quickly, "I will guard your interests here while you are gone."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE ROYAL DECREE

THE part played by Pedro de Valdivia in the restoration of law and order in Peru belongs, properly, to the history of that country. It was a chapter in his life apart from Chile. It seems to have nothing to do with Ines Suarez, who, after bidding him Godspeed, remained behind to guard his interests in the land they had conquered together. Yet nothing that had gone before, nothing that came after, was so vital to them both as what befell him in Peru.

It was December, 1547, when Valdivia departed from Valparaiso in the leaky ship of Bautista de Pastene. He was accompanied by ten noblemen, among them Gerónimo de Alderete, and he carried with him one hundred thousand *castellanos,* borrowed, as he told his King, "one thousand from one, fifteen hundred from another, giving notes in exchange, payable out of what the mines should return, twelve to fifteen thousand *pesos* annually."

Six weeks later he reached the harbor of Los Reyes, and learning that the Viceroy had landed and was on his way to Cuzco against Pizarro, Valdivia followed and met him in the valley of Andaguadailas, fifty leagues from Cuzco. He was greeted with joy by La Gasca, who knew his reputation as a soldier, and who now turned his entire army over to his charge, saying

that he thought better of Valdivia than of "eight hundred fighting men who might come to join him in that hour." Valdivia inspected the companies, making the gunners into a separate company; arranged the squadrons in the best order for the march; supplied the gunners with powder and match, the infantry with pikes and lances, personally examining all the arms. He put Gerónimo de Alderete in charge of artillery. This done, they went forward, marching sometimes great distances, sometimes short—owing to the snow, the cold, the extreme elevations—until they reached the River Apurimac, twelve leagues from Cuzco. Daily Valdivia assured the Viceroy that he would "break the enemy without losing thirty Spaniards." He kept his word. Between the strength of the gunners under Valdivia and the strength of the artillery under Alderete, with five hundred infantry and four hundred musketry and fifty cavalry, he restored the land to the King, losing but one man from his army. In the historic battle of Sacsahuaman (Jaqui jaguana, Valdivia called it) he crushed the army of rebels until Gonzalo Pizarro gave himself up for defeated. He begged them not to slay him, but he paid for his mutiny with his life.

Fifteen days later Valdivia received the prize he so long had craved, the royal grant of New Toledo. It was signed by the Viceroy La Gasca in the name and by the power conferred upon him in the new world by his Majesty, the King.

Proudly Valdivia set out for the harbor of Los Reyes and proceeded at once to buy a ship—credit to the amount of two hundred thousand *pesos* having been granted him by La Gasca—and with reinforcements of

two hundred soldiers, he set out for Chile. Most of the men and horses accompanied him by land. It was safer for the horses. He lost no time in making preparations. He was eager to return to Ines; eager to learn what had befallen his land during his absence.

He knew Ines Suarez would keep her promise, would do her utmost to safeguard his interests. He had faith in Francisco de Villagra. His judgment was good, but things had been far from peaceful while its conqueror was absent. The Indians had destroyed the town of La Serena and had killed forty Spaniards and a greater number of horses. His old enemy, Sancho de Hoz, in Santiago, taking advantage of Valdivia's absence, had sought to bring about a revolution and make himself leader. Ines Suarez, who never for one moment had forgotten that Sancho de Hoz was her enemy and had tried to kill her lover, was ever watchful of his movements. Convinced one day that he was endeavoring to foment rebellion among the soldiers, she redoubled her vigilance. From loyal soldiers who had been approached by Sancho de Hoz, she learned that he was aiming to overthrow the government, to do away with Villagra and make himself leader. She reported this to Villagra, who wasted no time. He ordered Sancho de Hoz hanged, together with his five accomplices. Thereafter peace was restored.

The *cabildo* of Santiago, thinking it timely to ask favors of the new Viceroy whose interests were being saved by their leader, sent an embassy to Peru begging La Gasca to confirm Pedro de Valdivia as Governor of Chile. The embassy went, but in the same ship went some of the sympathizers of Sancho de Hoz.

In the meantime, Pedro de Valdivia, en route home-

ward by land, was encountering difficulties. But of that—later. First let him have his hour of glory. Let him return in triumph to Santiago.

He reached the harbor of Valparaiso in June, 1549, and started at once for Santiago. Since word had gone ahead of him that the Governor was returning, a delegation went to the coast to meet him. Foremost among them was Ines Suarez.

Halfway between Valparaiso and Santiago they met, in a valley golden with the suns of autumn. They embraced. For a moment all else was forgotten. The soldiers accompanying them were disregarded. Ines greeted him with passion, searching his eyes to learn if all was unchanged. Valdivia returned her embrace with deep affection. Then he greeted his army. Outwardly all was as before. Yet there was something in their meeting, something in the grave eyes of Pedro de Valdivia that hung like a shadow between them as they rode through the valley. With woman's intuition Ines was quick to sense it, though nothing was said as they journeyed side by side. They climbed the hills until they came out upon the plains of Santiago. Before them stood the Cerro Santa Lucia, the Indians' Hill of Sorrow. Above them the giant Andes, snow-capped, feathery, soul-compelling, beckoned as they had beckoned that day nearly nine years before when the eyes of the conquerors first looked upon Chile.

Ines chatted gayly all along the route. Valdivia at times was gay, at times was strangely silent. Ines sought to draw from him the reason of these moments of silence.

"You are weary, my lord," she said. "You are ill?"

He nodded. "I was ill," he admitted. "For eight days I was at death's door; or so they told me." He shrugged his shoulders. "It is nothing," he said. "God chose to give me back my health. Now I am well."

"Ah!" Her eyes were anguished. "You were ill and I was not with you. You did not send for me. Could not someone have brought me word?"

"It was in Arequipa," he said. "The desert was between us."

"Only the desert?" she asked, turning to look into his eyes. "Only the desert between us? There is nothing more?" Her voice was low and tremulous. "Tell me, my lord," she pleaded. "Something troubles you. All is not well with you. You are not happy."

"I am a ruler, indeed," he said with a smile, but he avoided her eyes. "Here is the royal grant to the ruler of New Toledo. See, it is signed by La Gasca, in the name and by the power conferred on him by the King." From his saddlebag he brought forth the precious document and unrolled it before her eyes. His voice had a ring of triumph. His bearing was the bearing of a ruler. Yet there was a shadow in his eyes.

Ines read the document. "At last!" she said, with exultation. "You have earned it well. I rejoice with you. I am happy." She gave it back to him.

They reached Santiago on the day of Corpus Christi. A demonstration awaited him in the plaza. The *alcaldes,* gorgeous in their royal robes, stood on the steps of the *cabildo.* The priests in their long black habits, crucifixes at their sides, awaited him. The *regidores,* the soldiers, all the people, cheered when Pedro de Valdivia entered the plaza.

"Viva el jefe! Viva el conquistador!" they cried.

Valdivia acknowledged their cheers with great dignity. He presented the royal grant to the *cabildo* who, at once, proclaimed him Governor and Captain-General of Chile in the royal name and vowed obedience and fidelity. They delivered the royal banner into his keeping. A public holiday was declared. The bells of the cathedral were rung. Vespers were said. There was feasting in the halls of government. All day the city rejoiced while Valdivia went among his people, receiving their congratulations, their embraces, offering his hand to be kissed. Ines Suarez did not leave his side.

When the day of rejoicing ended, she went with him to their house on the plaza. Valdivia dropped wearily to a chair. Ines sat close beside him. The light of the candle on the table lighted her face with its aureole of chestnut gold hair. In the years they had been together she had grown more lovely, more the woman. Notwithstanding her hardships as a soldier, the privations endured in the conquest of the land, she had developed into a glorious creature, more than ever the woman desired of man.

For a long time they sat together, silence between them.

"You are troubled, my lord," said Ines, soothing his brow. "You have some great care on your mind."

From the pocket of his soldier jacket he took a *cédula* and spread it on the table before her eyes.

"We must part!" he said. "It is a royal decree!"

For a moment Ines was dumb. Then, snatching the *cédula* from the table she held it close to the light,

spelling it out word by word to the man who had taught her to read: it was dated November 9, 1549.

That it is ordered and I do order, in the name of Carlos, the Fifth, King of Spain and the Indias, that you, Pedro de Valdivia, Governor and Captain-General of the Provinces of Chile, shall cease all familiar relations with Ines Suarez. That you shall not live with her in one house, nor enter nor be with her in places open to suspicion; but that in all things you shall conduct yourself in such a manner as to end all dark suspicion that there is carnal intimacy between you. That within six months from the day you reach Santiago in the province of Chile you shall marry her off, or send her to these provinces of Peru to live, or that she return to Spain or some other country distant from Chile, which she may choose.

It was signed by Pedro de La Gasca with the rubric of the King.

Ines Suarez read the last word, sprang from the bench on which she was seated, and flung the document to the floor, the green glints in her eyes darting like serpents' tongues.

"This from the ruler whose empire you went to defend!" she exclaimed. "This the reward for your services in saving his throne, this for your loyalty, your victory over his enemies!"

Valdivia stooped down, picked up the royal order from the floor where it lay, and placed it upon the table before him.

"The Viceroy accused me of nothing," said Valdivia. "My enemies made charges against me." He offered to take her in his arms. She flung him off and gliding back and forth across the floor with sinuous, catlike motion, she clenched her fists and muttered:

"This is Ulloa's work. Ulloa—and that dastard, Sancho de Hoz, whose soul, God be praised, is now burning in hell."

"It is the work of Ulloa," said Valdivia. "You were right when you told me not to trust him. But there were others besides Ulloa who made the accusations—eight of them in all—eight soldiers whom I trusted, who had served me long in Chile, some of them since the beginning of the conquest." He tolled them off on his fingers: "Hernán Rodriguez de Monroi, Diego de Cespedes, Francisco de Rabdona, Antonio de Ulloa, Gabriel de la Cruz, Antonio Taravajano, Antonio Zapata, Lope de Landra."

"Some of them went to Peru in the ship with Francisco de Villagra," said Ines. "They were sympathizers with Sancho de Hoz. The *cabildo* let them go, knowing they were mischief-makers, yet hoping to rid Chile of their presence." She shook her head in sorrow.

"They did not sign the charges," said Valdivia, "but La Gasca found them out. The same day that he received the accusation he commenced the investigation to discover who were the authors of the document. In two days he had learned all. The paper had been written three days earlier in Lima, after I had left Los Reyes on my return journey to Chile."

Ines repeated the names of the accusers. Her canine teeth gleamed in a smile. "These noble Christians," she said, "most of whom have had their harems of Indians, have turned Inquisitors."

Little by little Valdivia calmed her. Little by little he told her the full story of his experiences in Peru. Holding her close in his arms he talked half the night. He began at the beginning, telling her of the battle of Sacsahuaman; of his victory over Gonzalo Pizarro, of the gratitude of the Viceroy who rewarded him with the order of the King as ruler of the land of Chile.

He told her of the joy that was in his heart when he set out to return to her and to Chile.

"It was the last day of August," he said. "I had started out by land with the soldiers who were to accompany me. While I was coming I reached a valley called Zama. There I was met by General Pedro de Hinojosa, accompanied by eight *arcabuzeros*. I received them with joy as servants of his Majesty. I asked Hinojosa why he had come. He replied that the Viceroy had been told that I was going along robbing the country and ill-treating the natives; that he had been asked to follow and learn if the reports were true. I asked him what he had learned and he said that it was to the contrary, that the dwellers in Arequipa and everywhere had said I had treated them very well. Yet he thought I had best go back and see the Viceroy. I told him that if this were an order from the Viceroy I would return, but if not I would continue on my way, since it was a long and tedious journey back to Los Reyes—a hundred and forty leagues of moving sands. The general said he would go to his house at Las Charcas and for me to continue on my way. I did so. When I had come to Atacama, three days later, the General once more appeared at my door and delivered a message this time from the royal *audiencia* ordering me to return to Los Reyes to give an explanation to his Majesty of certain charges that had been made against me. I gave orders for the saddling of horses, ordered some of my soldiers to remain where they were, others to proceed on their way, and taking four loyal horsemen with me I set out for the return. Seven days later, in Arequipa, I learned that my galley

was at the coast. I went down to her and on board and in ten days reached the harbor of Los Reyes.

"When we came to anchor in the harbor, the Viceroy, having heard of my arrival, came down to the sea to greet me. I told him I was grieved that he had troubled to write an order, that had he sent me an ordinary letter I should have returned at once. He thanked me for coming, showed me the charges that had been made against me. They were many—fifty-seven in all. He said he was well aware that all was untrue but that he had his duty to perform and must hear my defense from my lips——"

"Of what could they accuse you?" Ines interrupted. "You who have given your heart's blood for this conquest?"

Valdivia's voice was husky. "Of what did they not accuse me?" he said. "They charged me with disobedience of royal authority, of tyranny and cruelty toward my subalterns, of insatiable greed, of creating public scandal. They charged that I had taken two-thirds of the *repartimientos* for myself, dividing the other third between you and Don Gerónimo de Alderete. They said that I had taken all the gold they possessed, the securities they had brought from Peru; that I had jeopardized the lives of the soldiers in ordering them to seek for gold, and had treated them like Indians. They charged that, having resolved to go to Peru, I had a ship built in Valparaiso, taking the gold from many of the colonists and miserably deceiving them. They accused me of heresy, that I had preached a sermon in the church begging them to lend me their gold."

"They lie!" said Ines. "You can bring witnesses to

bear to the falsity of these charges——but what of me?" she asked. "Tell me the truth. I must know what they said of me. Though what they said can matter but little."

Valdivia told her. It was better she learned it from his lips.

"They accused me of having brought you from Peru," he said, "saying that I have lived in illicit relations with you, maintaining you in my house, eating at the same table. They charged that you were an avaricious woman, who received a large *repartimiento* of land and of Indians; that you made use of your influence over me to favor all those who gave me their gold; that you ordered all persecuted who offended you, counting on my affection for you to accede to all your caprices."

Ines tossed her head.

"What did the Viceroy say to that?" she asked eagerly.

"He told me, as in the beginning, that he did not believe these charges but wanted to hear my defense."

"And your defense was——?"

"My defense to all that touched you," he said with dignity, "was that you were an honored woman in my home, that you had come with me from Peru by order of the Marquis, Don Francisco Pizarro, to be with me and comfort me in my hardships. That you were my loyal supporter in all things, my gentle nurse in my infirmities and afflictions, the keeper of my house, the idol of my soldiers, a ministering angel to the Indian women and their children. That you were as brave a soldier as any officer in my command, and that you were greatly loved by all."

Ines smiled, comforted, and nestled close in his arms.

"And what now?" she asked. "What of me and of you? What of this sentence?"

Valdivia bowed his head, then, lifting it, his shoulders stiffened. "Obedience is the first piece in my armor," he said; "the first piece in the armor of any soldier. I have no will but my King's."

Ines demurred. They must obey the will of their King, of course. They must part. Yet even the King granted a respite—a stay of execution—of sentence. She read the order again. "It reads *six months,*" she said. "Six months from the day you reach Santiago in the province of Chile. It is now July."

"Six months." They repeated it together.

"That will give us to January," Ines told him; then, after a pause, she said eagerly: "Could we not write to the King? Could we not beg that he let me continue to live in Chile? Only to live here? Here in this land we have conquered together. I will obey the mandate. I will live apart from you. I will give you up. I will conduct myself in any manner the King desires, if only I may live in this land forever! Six months!" she repeated. "In six months we can have the King's answer. Until January, then, let us live!"

They lived together for six months more. Valdivia wrote to the King. He gathered testimonials from his companions to refute the charges brought by his enemies against him: of avarice, of heresy, of tyranny, of creating public scandal. He begged that Ines Suarez be permitted to remain in the land she had conquered, asking that the King confirm her right to the grants of land and of Indians he had made her. He secured the testimony of Padre Gonzales, of Gerónimo

de Alderete, of Rodrigo de Quiroga, of Diego Garcia de Villalon and many others. He had no difficulty in gathering testimonials. His *cabildo,* his soldiers, his priests, his friends, were eager to wipe away any stain that might tarnish his brave shield.

Valdivia made up a full and lengthy report and sent it to Pedro de La Gasca in Peru, asking him to forward it to the King. It was dated the ninth of July, 1549.

They determined to lose no time, however, while waiting for the King to answer. Valdivia was Govenor of Chile in fact as well as in deed. He had his country to rule. He must neglect no duty.

He refounded the town of La Serena, appointed a new council, punished the Indians with such success that they came in peaceably and ready for service.

Ines Suarez, hopeful that the King would grant her plea to remain in the land she had served, prepared for the separation she knew must come. With a hundred Indians as builders, she built a house. Not on the plaza, where small souls might accuse her of dwelling too near to her lover; but far out, under the brow of the Cerro Santa Lucia—the Indians' Hill of Sorrow. It was a three-story house she built, with a flagged courtyard in the center and a double door studded with constellations of iron nails. There was a stone stairway leading to the upper stories from the courtyard. It was a reproduction, built from memory, of her home in Spain, her *casa paterna* in Plasencia the beautiful (thanks be to God and to man).

The house completed and La Serena founded, they determined to build more towns. They must continue the penetration of the land until every hectare was under control; until every infidel was conquered. They

must build more cities—to the south, first, one close to the Bio-Bio River.

To this end Valdivia resolved to hold a great review of his troops, to learn his full muster for the conquest of the land. They determined to go forward in December, though it was the last act of their lives together. The time intervening they would devote to making preparations.

It was Our Lady's Day in September when Valdivia went out to review his troops. As he rode about on the plain a light rain was falling. His horse, slipping on muddy ground, fell with him and on him. A cry went up from his soldiers when they saw their chief go down. Lifting him—for he was unable to rise—they carried him to his house on the plaza. There they learned that he was severely injured. His body was a mass of bruises. His right hand was injured, the thumb dislocated. Every toe on his right foot was broken, some in many places.

For three months he lay in bed, yielding like the soldier he was to the brutal surgery of the day; watching with unflinching eyes while his companions—acting in the rôle of surgeons—removed the broken bones bit by bit.

During those days Ines scarcely left his side. She ministered to his wants. She nursed him. She helped to soothe him in those sleep-tormented hours. She clung to each day, each hour, counting each moment with him as a rich gift. But no word came from their King.

Early in December Valdivia rose from his bed, but only to sit in a chair. He could not stand. They passed the Christmas festival together, knowing well

it would be their last. Valdivia grew restless from inactivity, was eager to be about his labors.

"We hold the land only to the limits of this province," he told Ines. "We must go farther and build our town to the south. If we do not do it now that the food crops are upon the land, we shall have to put it off for another year. A conqueror should brook no delay. He should be lord of his empire."

"You must wait, my lord," Ines pleaded. "You are too weak to stand, much less to conquer. Wait a month —or two—or three—" she pleaded. "You will have strength then, though you will not have me."

"In three months more it will be winter," he said. "The Indians will have stored their crops. The rains and the snows will have come. We cannot go about the land. It will mean a full year's delay. I must be about the business of my King."

Against her wishes and her judgment; against the judgment of his soldiers, of his people, for he could neither stand on his foot nor mount to his saddle, Valdivia gave orders for two hundred men on foot and mounted to prepare for the conquest of more land. He instructed Bautista de Pastene to take ship and provisions and meet him down the coast. Then he ordered his Indians to carry him in his chair and left Santiago for the south.

Ines rode her white horse beside him. "In another month," she told him, "our stay of sentence will have ended. We may no longer live together as man and woman, but as soldiers we may fight—and die."

So slow was their journey through the mountainous route to the southward that twenty days had elapsed before they reached the limits of the province of San-

tiago. By that time Valdivia had won back some of his strength and was able to mount his horse. He rode among his men, setting them in order, ordering the army to keep close together, the servants and the baggage in the center, a force always at the rear.

As they proceeded southward the mountains—receding farther from the coast—left the land less rugged, but thick forests grew all around. Every day thirty or forty men went ahead to explore the ground, to get the lay of the land, to mark out a place for encampment for the night. Some days Valdivia went with them. Other days the *maestre de campo* or Gerónimo de Alderete did the exploring.

Wherever Valdivia went Ines rode beside him. He grew stronger each day, but they were never separated on the march. A thousand kings might decree that they could no longer be lover and mistress, but as companions in the conquest they had begun, they would end.

The Indians grew hostile as they advanced toward the south, trying to block their road. In spite of opposition, they advanced. They crossed the River Itata forty leagues from the city of Santiago, where the limits of the conquered territory ended. They marched thirty leagues inland from the sea, reached the Nivequeten River (now the Laja), which Valdivia described as "two musket-shots wide." Here again they were set upon by Indians, who attempted to prevent their crossing. Two thousand natives, at least, came upon them at this time, but the Spaniards defeated them, taking three *caciques* prisoners.

They reached the Bio-Bio, wide, deep, muddy. The soldiers built rafts for crossing, since the fording could

not be accomplished on horseback. While the rafts were being launched, they were attacked, the natives swimming the river, evidently trusting in their superior numbers to defeat the invaders. Valdivia charged them with his forces as they climbed up the banks, slew at least a hundred, while the others cast themselves into the river and retreated.

Valdivia went farther up the river and when he had gone two leagues, more Indians appeared—twenty thousand, so the chroniclers said. With twenty mounted men Captain de Alderete charged them. Again the Indians, terrified by the horses, cast themselves into the river and disappeared. Alderete and his mounted men pursued them.

Late that night he returned to camp with his soldiers, bringing with him hundreds of captive Indians and driving ahead of his army a flock of more than a thousand sheep.

For several days the soldiers rested and feasted on fresh meat. While the soldiers rested and feasted Valdivia and Ines crossed the river, with fifty mounted men, and rode two days toward the shore in the neighborhood of Arauco. There they came upon a settlement of Indians so thick that with such a small body of men they thought it unwise to give battle. They returned to camp where Valdivia sent two of the captured *caciques* back to their tribes with this message:

"Tell your people to come in peaceably, in the name of the King of Spain and the Indias. Tell them to come and be baptized as Christians; otherwise we will kill them."

He ordered a rest of eight days to await the reply

of the Araucanians. Half the army kept watch one night and the other half the next.

One night, as the soldiers were changing watch, the Indians replied—in person. In three massed divisions, thousands of them in each mass, they rushed upon the Christians, with such loud shouting and such heavy onslaught that they seemed to overwhelm the land. For three hours the Spaniards fought without being able to penetrate one squadron with their mounted men, and when at last they did succeed in wedging one hundred mounted soldiers into one squadron the Indians fought with such furor that the horses would have been lost had not Valdivia thrown his footmen in to aid them. In the end the Spaniards were victorious, though sixty Christians were wounded, with their horses under them, and one Spaniard was killed who got in the way of the arquebus fire. The battlefield was strewn with the bodies of dead Indians; hundreds more were taken captive, yet thousands escaped.

Again Valdivia sent captives back to their tribes with his message. "Tell them they must submit peacefully to the rule of the Spaniards, in the name of the King of Spain. They must suffer themselves to be baptized as Christians, or they will be killed to the last man."

For several days there was no reply to the message. The invaders went about unhindered. With a guard of mounted men Ines and Valdivia explored the country. They found a gently rolling land of great beauty. A healthful land, fruitful, fertile. Giant wild rhubarb plants grew on the hillside; tall bamboo was in blossom. Feathery ferns brushed the branches of massive trees.

Gothic Araucanian pines tapered their tall crests to the sky of summer blue.

They found—south of the Bio-Bio—traces of gold mine washings which the Indians had sought to hide and in the rubbish at the mouths of small rivers, they found the glint of ore. One and a half leagues to the north of the Bio-Bio they found a sheltered harbor, superior to any harbor they yet had seen. A broad headland and an island gave it protection from the winter storms of the sea. A broad river flowed into it. Fish of all kinds abounded: sardines, cod, sole—a thousand other kinds of fish. In the harbor they found also—Captain Bautista de Pastene, with the supplies Valdivia had ordered from Santiago.

"Here we shall found a great city," said Valdivia. "It will be finer even than Seville."

"It is the last foundation we shall lay together," Ines reminded him. "One more week together and"—she flung her arms wide—"what does it matter what comes after?" she said. "I shall not be with you. Nothing else matters."

They returned to camp and brought the army back to the new location. They set about building a fortress. With giant trees fastened together like a wattle fence, and a deep ditch outside, they built a defense which, they believed, would protect them from the most warlike Indians. In eight days the fort was completed. The quarters were assigned to the soldiers. Here they could shelter their sick and wounded. Here they could rest instead of keeping watch all night in armor. When they were safely sheltered, Valdivia sent his third message to the Indians:

"This is the third and last message," he told them.

"Submit peacefully to the Spaniards. Let the priests baptize you. Otherwise you must die."

That night the Indians mobilized for war by the Araucanian method—the running of the arrow. The *cacique* who first learned the message sent a messenger to his nearest neighbor with an arrow dipped in the blood of a freshly killed *guanaco*. The *cacique* thus notified called his tribe together and, dipping the arrow once more in blood, sent it to the next tribe. Thus, throughout the length and breadth of Chile, the bloody arrow went. Three days later they were seen at vespertide by the lookouts on the ridges.

"They are coming in four enormous divisions," said the lookouts. "They appear to be at least a hundred thousand strong. They are dressed in the skins of llamas and the dyed skins of seal. They are wearing tall headpieces like priests' hats and these are surmounted with plumes. They are armed with bows and arrows. Their spears are at least twenty feet long. They have clubs and staves and the deadly *macana* that can break a horse's back with one blow. It appears that they are planning to attack on four sides."

Valdivia gave orders to Gerónimo de Alderete to guard one gate with fifty of his best mounted men ready to charge the first squadron that came against the gate. He with as many more stood ready to make the second charge.

With blood-curdling yells the Indians poured out from the forest: bows at shoulders, spears, clubs, *macanas* in hand. To the Spaniards watching, it seemed that the forest had come alive and was surging like a sea against them.

"Cristo y Santiago! Santiago y El Rey!" Above

the yells of the barbarians, the war cry of the *conquistadores* rang out. Gerónimo de Alderete, veteran of the Italian wars, rose in his saddle and charged with his mounted men. They trampled the Indians underfoot, they slashed to left and right with their sabers. But a second squadron advanced. Valdivia charged, mowing them down like wheat. More Indians surged forward.

The gunfire of the Spaniards rang out. Still the Indians came. Every horseman in the Spanish army rode against them, but there were a thousand Indians to every horseman.

Ines Suarez, on her white horse, charged with the soldiers of Valdivia, fighting wildly, madly. What did she care for life? Her stay of sentence had ended; more than ended, as she well knew. What did she care for life? The King had taken her lover. As a soldier she could fight—and die. The sharp point of an Indian's spear struck her morion from her head. Her long hair tumbled about her shoulders, lighted to red gold by the sun. Her cloak floated in the wind. She rose in her stirrups, her saber flashing. She leaned forward on her horse, slashing to left—to right.

Above the war cry of the Indians, above the screech of the bullets, the clash of steel, the voice of a woman was heard:

"Bow down to the Christians," Ines shouted. "Bow down to the Christians." She spoke in the dialect of the Indian, using the few words she knew. "Do not oppose the Christians. They are brave and Christ, the Great Spirit, is with them. They will kill you without mercy."

Her horse rose on its haunches, lifting her high above the heads of the enemy. Her hair streamed in the wind.

Valdivia, seeing her in great danger, forced his horse ahead of her, but still she fought.

Suddenly, without signal from any leader, the Indians fell back. The first squadron ceased fighting. The three squadrons behind, seeing their leaders falter, did likewise, lost ground, turned and fled. The Spaniards pursued them, mowing them down. Suddenly as the battle began, it ended. At least two thousand Indians lay dead upon the field. As many more were taken prisoner.

"A comet fell among us," the prisoners muttered, "a comet far brighter than other comets, and when it had fallen a beautiful woman emerged from it, a woman with hair aflame, who said: 'Obey the Christians! Obey the Christians! For they are brave and will kill you all.' "

At daybreak the following morning Ines Suarez and Pedro de Valdivia said farewell. They rode together through the dense forest that fringed the margins of their fort. The fragrance of pine and of *boldo* was around them, hazel bushes brushed their stirrups. Their horses crushed beneath their hoofs the silvery green leaves of the *doca* plant. A squad of horsemen who were to accompany Ines back to Santiago rode with them.

They reached the opening in the forest. Over the hills stretched the road to the north. The soldiers went ahead to grant them privacy at parting. But they wanted no privacy. They wanted nothing. They must obey their King.

Unsheathing her sword, Ines saluted the ground they had conquered, then grasping her sword by the blade that was stained with blood, she lifted it high above

her head. Valdivia whipped his sword from its scabbard and repeated the action. Above their heads the hilts touched. That was their last kiss. Without a word they parted. Ines put spurs to her horse and joined the soldiers who had gone ahead. A few paces on, she turned. Valdivia was seated in his saddle where she had left him. His sword was still upraised, high in the air above his head.

Returning to his camp, Valdivia addressed his King, writing from the new city of Concepción, telling him of the last battle, of his equipment in horses and men, of the amount of money he had spent so far in the conquest—two hundred and ninety-seven thousand *castellanos* in horses, arms, clothing—and adding:

> And I would spend a million if need be, if I had them or could borrow, and agree to be put in irons for their repayment. For this way of serving your Majesty was shown to me by my fathers who were generals of their King and whom I have followed in the profession of arms.

He dated it from the City of Concepción of the Nuevo Extremo "your most humble subject, servant and vassal, who kisses your sacred hands and feet."

But of Ines Suarez he said nothing.

CHAPTER TWENTY

PEACE, AND THE PASSING

INES SUAREZ returned to Santiago. There was no message from Peru; no word from the King.

She sought Padre Rodrigo Gonzales. The old priest heard her story. He who had been her father confessor for nine years, who had endured the hardships of those years in a new land, divined far more than she told him. The long locks that brushed his shoulders were white. The years that had whitened his locks had taught him much of the human heart. Yet the human heart was deceitful; obedience to one's King was a dogma.

"The royal decree must be obeyed, my daughter," he told her. "There is no other way. You know what the Viceroy has ordered. You know what the conditions are. Since the King has not seen fit to abrogate them, you have no choice but to obey. You may live in Peru; you may return to Spain; go to some other country of your choice or . . . you may marry."

Ines caught her breath. "I cannot marry," she said. "As for Spain, it is not home to me now. I have no one there. Old Luz and Pancho, my devoted servants, have long since joined their Maker. Peru? It is a mad land. Only this is real. . . ." She extended her arms, embracing all Chile in her gesture. "I want to remain here always—here in this green land. Why, *padre*,

don't you see? It is my child—born of my travail and labor. Don't send me away from Chile—for the love of God."

The old priest nodded understandingly. "Then there is but one way," he said. "You must marry." Ines made no reply, and the priest added: "Yes, my daughter, you should marry. You are a young woman, still in your thirties, are you not? You have a long life before you."

"Too long, perhaps." Her smile was wistful.

"It is your priest who is speaking to you, my daughter," he said, "not your friend."

Ines continued to smile wistfully. "I honor my priest," she said, "but please, *padre,* speak as my friend."

"Then as your friend and your priest," he said, "I advise you to marry. You have your choice," he said. "It is in your own hands. You can marry——"

"Whom?" she interrupted. "Who—knowing—knowing that I accept matrimony only that I may remain . . . ?"

The priest placed his hand tenderly on her head.

"There is one who loves you," he said. "His name is Rodrigo de Quiroga. Have you not seen it? I have. He has loved you always. Since the night he first saw you by the light of the flickering torches standing before the gate of Los Reyes, you with your squad of old men who had come out of the sea."

"Captain Quiroga!" Ines said, in amazement, then hastily added: "No, *padre!* No! No! Do not ask me to marry anyone."

"Why not?" the priest asked. "Captain Rodrigo

loves you. He is a brave soldier. He is young. He has a future before him. With him you would forget——"

Ines rose to her full height. "Forget?" she said. "You do not know me, *padre*. I forget nothing. Though I live in the land of the infidel, do I forget Christ? Though I am surrounded by Indian chiefs, do I forget my King? Were I to marry twenty husbands, for me there is but one love." Her voice was the voice of despair.

The old priest calmed her as he would calm a child. "There! There!" he said. "After all, Captain Quiroga is in La Serena. It may be months before he returns." Then his eyes twinkled merrily. "As for ships, there are none in the harbor. You cannot fly to Spain. You cannot go alone through the desert. Even the King knows that. We will wait a little, but while you wait, think well of what I have said."

Ines had plenty of time to think. She retired to her house at the foot of Santa Lucia and there, surrounded by her Indian servants, she remained waiting, praying that no ship would come to port, knowing if one did she must obey. Lonely, alone, as far as white companionship was concerned, a soldier homesick for the sound of battle, she tried to fill her hours with the domestic affairs of woman. She sewed, she embroidered, she taught the Indian women and children the prayers of her Church. She planted flowers in the garden. She made vestments for the altar.

Sometimes she drove about the city, riding in her two-wheeled *caleta,* drawn by a pair of young colts she had broken to the harness; colts whose sire and whose dam had come the long journey through the

desert. Sometimes Padre Gonzales, returning from a pilgrimage to the south, would bring her news of the army. Ines would listen wide-eyed for word of Pedro de Valdivia. Seated in the sun-bathed *patio,* she would let her gourd of *mate* grow cold in her hands while the old priest, sipping at the *bombilla,* told her what was happening in the south.

The conquest of Araucania progressed. Another city had been founded in addition to Concepción. It had been given the name of Imperial—in honor of the King. Yes, that was it. Located on the banks of the River Cautín. Of a certainty. It had been won with very little fighting. True! True! The Indians seemed to have submitted at last. Don Pedro? *Por cierto!* He was well and always active. Never idle a moment. Pushing the conquest farther southward; gaining new territory each day.

One morning the *padre* came to call all of a flutter; all excitement. Word had come overland from Peru. The Viceroy La Gasca had fled the country, leaving all in confusion. He had taken ship to Panama—and after that? Who knows. There was no law, no order in Los Reyes; no one at the head of the government—no one at all. Some soldiers had fled to Chile bringing the news. Others were following bringing their wives, who already had come out from Spain, believing the land to be at peace.

"And the order? The letter. From the King?" asked Ines breathlessly. "Perhaps La Gasca never forwarded Don Pedro's letter to the King. Perhaps the King does not know of the sentence."

The old priest's brow was puzzled.

"Surely," said Ines, "I may remain in Chile. An

New settlers came—from Panama—bringing their wives. Rich merchants, who had grown weary of tropical heat and hearing that Chile was a fair land, thought to try a change to a temperate climate.

Ines remained apart from them all. Especially did she remain apart from the women. She found it difficult to accustom herself to the sight of these women going to mass through the streets that had known the tramp of the soldier. In her heart she resented the sound of high feminine voices where lately she had heard the cries of battle.

The women had no desire to make her acquaintance. They, too, remained aloof. Some of them drew aside when Ines passed them in the street. Those who had come from Peru had heard gossip—for its tongue was long. Those who had not heard, quickly got the story from the others. "This woman came with the soldiers," they whispered. "She lived in their camp in the desert. She ate at their mess. She was the *amante* of their chief, Don Pedro de Valdivia, who even now remains conquering in the south, separated from her by royal order."

Ines ignored them; ignored their whispers. With her gallant head held high, she walked along the *calles,* moving swiftly, sinuously, with her feline motion. She disdained the tiresome chatter of these women who spent their lives embroidering, gossiping, sleeping, growing fat and unlovely over long *siestas.*

One day—it may have been as late as October—and the year was no doubt 1552, Ines had a caller. But not a woman. It was Don Gerónimo de Alderete who came. He had returned to Santiago, bringing with him the major portion of the army from the south.

Ines greeted him with joy. He brought news of Don Pedro de Valdivia. Yes, God be praised, Don Pedro was in good health; though grown a little too heavy, lacking exercise except what he got riding, since the accident to his foot. Victorious? Of a certainty! So victorious that he had thought it unnecessary to maintain a large army in the south and had sent half of the soldiers back to headquarters in Santiago. He was keeping a small army with him in the newly conquered territory.

A small army? Why a small army? Ines grew uneasy.

But the Araucanian was conquered, Don Gerónimo told her. Another city had been founded almost at the limits of Chile. Valdivia, this city had been called, after the *jefe*. A most strategic location, too, at the junction of two rivers where they flowed into the sea. From there ships would be sent to explore the Straits of Magellan. More accurate maps must be made. Communication with Spain could be accomplished in far shorter time.

Ines' heart beat fast. She was not at all sure she wanted communication with Spain to be accomplished in shorter time.

"But, so small an army," she said. "The Indians are treacherous. Don Pedro knows that well."

Don Gerónimo was not worried. He talked with Ines for a long, long time. They conversed as two soldiers might converse. Of how the army fared. And the horses? Always the horses. And what was the character of the country that had been conquered? Was it rich? Yes, in gold and in silver. The mines between Imperial and Concepción were producing more than

thirteen marks of gold per day. All this Don Gerónimo told her. It was because of the finding of gold that he had returned to Santiago. He, being the royal treasurer, must be about his duties. He must arrange for the distribution of the treasure. Must see that the royal fifth was sent off to Spain without delay. After they had visited more than an hour, Don Gerónimo took his leave.

Late that afternoon there was a *fiesta* in the Plaza of Santiago. The soldiers who had returned from the conquests in the south were given an ovation by the people. The *alcaldes* and the *regidores,* all the administrators of justice, sat in their chairs of state on the balcony of the *cabildo* that overlooked the plaza and cheered with pride while the soldiers in full armor passed before them in review.

After the review of the soldiers, Don Gerónimo de Alderete, as royal treasurer appointed by the King, made an address to the people. He reviewed the story of the Conquest; told of the newly founded towns; mentioned the riches of the gold mines; discoursed with pride of the amount of *quintos* that would go to the King.

The newly arrived citizens of Santiago, the merchants and their wives, seated in their carriages about the plaza or parading in the section reserved for pedestrians, listened to all he had to say.

Ines Suarez, alone in her *caleta,* remained apart from the throng. The other women gathered in groups; exchanged greetings with each other; paused while their men cried *vivas;* chattered from carriage to carriage.

Don Gerónimo de Alderete, addressing the throngs

from the balcony, saw Ines sitting alone. He noted, with a frown, how the other women seemed to avoid her. His speech ended, he bowed in acknowledgment of the cheers.

"Viva the treasurer!" the people cried. *"Viva* Don Gerónimo de Alderete. *Viva el Tesorero Real!"* Then one by one the names of the officers were mentioned and given their measure of applause.

Don Gerónimo bowed again and leaving the balcony hurried down the steps of the *cabildo.* Joining the throng in the plaza, he went straight to the carriage of Ines Suarez and offering his hand he led her to the balcony of the *cabildo.* There standing beside her he cried:

"Viva Doña Ines de Suarez! *Viva* a gallant lady!" and stooping low, he kissed her hand.

A cry rang out from the soldiers. *"Viva* Doña Ines!" they cried. *"Viva la mujer soldado!* Long live the woman soldier!"

One by one the citizens took up the cry; faintly the voices of the women echoed. *"Viva* Doña Ines!" they said, though they said it feebly.

Before the week had passed, the wives of two of the richest merchants from Peru called at the house of Ines Suarez. They found her engrossed in deep conversation with Padre Gonzales, who had arrived a few moments ahead of them. They had taken advantage of the Spanish custom which permitted the newcomer to make the first call, but their visit was brief. Ines greeted them with dignity, but from the pallor of her face they feared that her soul needed priestly consolation. Therefore they remained but a few moments.

After they had gone Padre Gonzales continued the conversation that had been interrupted by their coming:

"Yes," he repeated, "today the King's order has come—but it is not for you. It concerns only the men in the province—the married men. It has been forwarded by the royal *audiencia* at Panama. The King has commanded that every married man in the province of Chile must go or send for his wife. Gerónimo de Alderete is leaving today for Valparaiso, there to take ship for Spain. He is carrying the royal fifth—thirty thousand *pesos* in gold. When he returns he will bring his wife and family with him, as well as the wives of some of the soldiers. He will bring also"—the old priest paused—"he will bring María Ortiz de Gaete—the wife of Pedro de Valdivia."

Ines Suarez' face was white. "The King has sent no word of me?" she asked. "No. I am forgotten!" She said it with bitterness. "It is only the wives who are remembered. Only the wives."

"It is better for all," said Padre Gonzales. "A new race will spring up here, born of the union of Spanish and Indian, but the Spaniards must predominate—must rule. Now that the land is at peace, the wives of the soldiers must come. They must rear families, Spanish families."

Through the door of the courtyard standing open, Ines could look down the broad street. It was lined with gray adobe houses bathed by the sun. The scent of mimosa filled the air. In the center of the courtyard the *jacaranda* tree was in bloom—a mass of blue flowers. Tiny petals drifted down like fragments of summer sky. Around the door of the kitchen Indian children were

playing. Their faces were copper-colored but their features were Spanish.

For a moment Ines said nothing. Then in a voice that was no more than a whisper, she said: "Let the women come. Let them sit in the shade of these trees I have planted, beside these flowers I have sown. Let them live on the gold I have helped to discover, with the soldiers I have nursed and fed. Let the women of Spain come. Why not? It is a safe land now for Spain and the women of Spain."

After the priest had gone, she sat with wide, staring eyes. After a time the bitterness left her. She was wondering. Was Chile as safe as they thought? For days she wondered, thinking, thinking. Gerónimo de Alderete had said the Indians offered no resistance to the founding of new towns. Yet they had acted so before. They had permitted the Spaniards to settle Santiago; then had attacked. They had been quiet before the burning of La Serena. That was the Indians' way.

Ines grew restless. Eagerly she listened for word from the south. Yes, the Indians were quiet. Valdivia had established his seventh city; Angol, they had called it; midway between Imperial and Concepción. Three forts, too, had been erected; at Arauco; at Purén; at Tucapel, this last on the western fringe of the Cordilleras. Don Pedro was resting now with his army in the city of Concepción.

Three forts! The news of the erection of three forts was far from comforting to Ines Suarez. Why, if the Indians were subdued, had Don Pedro erected three forts? She remembered a lengthy letter Don Pedro

had written to his King when first he encountered the natives south of the Bio-Bio:

"In all my thirty years of fighting against many nations," he had said, "I have never seen such fierce fighters as these Indian soldiers. They attacked, packed together in squadrons like the *Tudescos* [the Germans] and their numbers seem like the blades of wheat."

The subject of these forts possessed Ines' mind. Why had Pedro de Valdivia erected three forts if the enemy was subdued? She discussed it with Padre Gonzales, and with some of the officers stationed in Santiago. Did this look as if Don Pedro expected more trouble from the Indians? Some of the soldiers thought not. Others doubted. It was probably a measure of precaution which Valdivia—wise soldier that he was—thought best. Still—three forts—Ines could not get them out of her mind night or day.

Early in December of 1553 a hurried order came to Santiago for supplies to be moved to Concepción: food, ammunition and horses. Almost on the heels of that order came a call for reinforcement of men, and a rumor that three Spanish soldiers had been killed by Indians while journeying between Arauco and Tucapel.

A body of troops moved southward. More rumors came. An attack had been made on one of the forts—Tucapel—they thought. Fifty Indians had come one morning bringing bales of grass as fodder for the horses. When they were well inside the gates, they had thrown down the bundles of grass, displaying the clubs and spears which they had concealed inside. The Spaniards had attacked and repulsed them, but the Indians were preparing for a general uprising. They were headed by a young *toqui*—Lautaro, who had

massed his people saying: "Brothers, these Christians are not gods. They are mortals just as we are mortal and can be slain as we are slain. More than that, their horses can be slain and when it is hot they tire easily and cannot gallop. Let us fight now or forever we shall be slaves."

"Lautaro!" It was the mention of Lautaro that filled Ines with alarm. Lautaro—who had been stable-boy to Valdivia, who knew all about horses, who had learned the use of gunpowder.

All night after the coming of that rumor, Ines tossed on a restless bed. Before the sun had lighted the tops of the mountains next morning, she was up and dressed. She awakened her household, ordered her white horse to be saddled, bags of provisions to be packed for a journey. Then, with one of the Indian slaves she had brought from Peru following behind her and carrying her armor and equipment, she set out for the south.

It was a hundred leagues and more to Concepción. It was midsummer. By day the heat was intense. The sun shone pitilessly. The dust of the road wrapped her in dense clouds. It was only when the sun had set and the cool breeze blew down from the mountains that the traveling was done with any degree of comfort. But comfort was Ines Suarez' least desire. Day after day she journeyed, stopping for the night only when her horse could go no farther, setting off again at daybreak.

It required more than two weeks to make the journey. Not one Indian did she meet along the way. Yet an ominous silence prevailed.

An icy hand gripped at her heart as she entered the dense pine forest where she and Pedro de Valdivia had

said farewell. There was no sign of Don Pedro now. No sign of any soldier. Spurring her horse to a last feeble effort, she entered the city of Concepción. The *cuartel* stood empty. Horses and riders were gone. The silence of death lay over the city. Her horse's hoofs rang like an echo through a tomb. The plaza was bare. A single sentry paced grimly back and forth before the door of the closed *cabildo*.

Inez spurred her horse and dashed toward the sentry. His face was haggard. In one brutal sentence he told the whole tragic story. Pedro de Valdivia was dead. Killed by the Indians. And with him every one of his forty horsemen who had gone with him to punish the rebels, all of them cruelly murdered near Tucapel. The leader of the Indians was Lautaro.

Ines dug her spurs into her horse's flanks. He leapt into the air, then fell back on his haunches, his bridle gripped tight in the hands of the sentry on duty.

"It is no use, señora," the sentry shook his head. "It is no use your going. Already Captain Francisco de Villagra and the army have gone to avenge the murder. They are five days ahead of you on the road."

Ines' proud head drooped low. Helpless as a falling leaf, she slipped from her saddle to the ground. In an instant she was on her knees praying. There, on the soil they had conquered together, she knelt, oblivious of the sentry, with clasped hands uplifted, praying for the soul of Pedro de Valdivia, her lover.

It was long, long afterwards before the whole story was told her—if the whole story has ever been told. Bit by bit the tale of that fatal day was gathered—from

rumor—from hearsay—from confessions secured later by torturing the Indians.

All the Indians south of the Bio-Bio had united. Those who apparently had submitted to Spanish rule had apprised the others of the movements of the Christians. The attack had been planned by Lautaro. He had formed the whole horde into groups to enter the battle one group after the other until they had exhausted the Christians. When Valdivia with his "forty of fame" had advanced that morning, he had found the fort at Tucapel a heap of smoldering ruins and not an Indian in sight. Thinking the natives had hidden in the ruins, Valdivia ordered his companions to advance. As they mounted the last rise of ground before the fort, a platoon of Indians appeared before them, their lances raised in challenge. In a moment the fight was on. The Spaniards repulsed the first group, but a second platoon appeared. These, repulsed like the first, were followed by a third and a fourth.

All day long the Indians kept on coming, until Valdivia, unwilling to order his men to continue against such heavy odds, turned to his forty and said: "Gentlemen, what shall we do?" He who had commanded soldiers for thirty-five years, now asked for an order. "What shall we do?" he asked the question again.

It was Captain Altamirano from Medellín who answered:

"What would your lordship have us do," he said, "except to fight and to die?"

Without another word, they charged. It was their final offensive. They advanced through the marshes pushing their oppressors toward the open ground where, it seemed, lay safety. But their horses were

worn from the all-day fight under the hot sun. They bogged down in the marshes. Indians sprang from the reed beds, hundreds, thousands of them, fighting like demons. With their war clubs they beat down the horses, dragging the riders from their mounts, killing them one by one. At last only Pedro de Valdivia and a priest named Pozo were left. Their horses were bogged to the girths. The Indians killed the priest, stripped the clothes from Valdivia and, tying his hands behind his back, forced him to retreat half a league, pricking him with their lances, until he had reached a spot where the rebel chiefs were gathered to await him.

On the banks of a stream where the bubbling troughs of the Spaniards bore testimony to their recent search for gold—there Lautaro, the *toqui,* awaited his former master. A cup of molten ore was in his hand. He forced the hot metal down Valdivia's throat, saying: "Gold is the food of the Christians. Here is gold. Eat your fill."

Such was the story. No more. Ines did not wait to hear it. Pedro de Valdivia was dead! He had died as a soldier—fighting!

She retraced her steps to Santiago. Here, mercifully, new duties claimed her. An epidemic of fever—the *chavalonga*—had broken out. Her place was there with the priests. Feverishly she plunged into the work of caring for the stricken. The work of nursing gave her little time to think.

The epidemic over, she retired to her house at the foot of Santa Lucia. There she remained. Sometimes she would climb to the top of the Cerro to gather the blood-red *copihues* which climbed up the trunks of the trees. Sometimes, forgetting why she had come, she

would stand looking down at the verdant valley, the white waters of the Mapocho foaming over the rocks, the streets of Santiago checked out in the orderly rows which Pedro de Valdivia had planned. Sometimes, seated on a rock, she would gaze dry-eyed at the billowy Andes until the setting sun crimsoned their white crests. Then, when the evening mists crept stealthily up from the valley and wrapped her in their chill embrace, she would go down to her lonely *casa*.

Ines Suarez became an important member of the growing city, consulted on all affairs of state, active in the work of the Church. She never left Chile.

For twenty years the Spaniards fought the Araucanians; for twenty years the Indians opposed them. Lautaro was killed, yet the Indians continued to fight. A new *toqui,* Caupolican, arose. He too was vanquished. In the end the victory was to the Spaniards, for even as they fought they built, wielding the sword with one hand while with the other they established their cities, as Valdivia their leader had taught them.

As through the baseless fabric of a dream, Ines Suarez heard the reports of these campaigns, reports which today gave the victory to the natives, tomorrow to the Spaniards. But never again did Ines Suarez ride her white horse to battle. Her days of soldiering were ended. The voice of her captain was still.

A few months after the death of Valdivia, María Ortiz de Gaete reached Chile. She did not wait for Gerónimo de Alderete to bring her. Learning of the great fortune in lands, in gold, in Indians, possessed by her husband, she secured permission of the King and hurried to Santiago. She reached Chile without knowing of the death of Don Pedro, but there is no record

that she mourned. She came, as one chronicler had said, not to be a dreamer of daydreams but to inherit a fortune. With her she brought many of her people: her sister and her brother-in-law with their four children, her aunt, her uncle, and many servants and relations. She brought no children of her own, since none were born of her union with Pedro de Valdivia.

Ines Suarez could never forget, but in time she saw the kind wisdom of what Padre Gonzales had suggested; and she and Captain Rodrigo de Quiroga, who had loved her since she had appeared that night with her squad of old men who had come from the sea, in the light of the torches at the gate of Los Reyes, were married.

Gerónimo de Alderete never returned to Chile. Accompanied by his wife, he embarked for that land from Spain, but, no longer young and worn out with the long campaigns, he was stricken with fever and died off the island of Taboga near Panama.

Charles the Fifth had retired. Wearied of royal life, he resigned from the throne of Spain on January 15, 1556, and retired to the convent of Yuste, only a few miles from Plasencia, the beautiful, in the old province of Extremadura.

Today on the summit of the hill of Santa Lucia there is a statue of Don Pedro de Valdivia. From the granite heights above the city of Santiago he looks down on the fulfillment of his dreams. He stands—an heroic figure—clad in full armor. His left hand rests upon his sword. In his right hand he clasps a roll of parchment, a royal order from his idol, the King.

There is no statue erected to Ines Suarez—none, at least, that human eyes can see. Yet sometimes, when

the moon is over the Andes, the shadow of a woman is seen on the rock of Santa Lucia. She is clad in armor and rides a white horse. A sword is clasped in her hand and on her lips there is a whisper: "Santiago and the King!" Yet the shadow may be but the mists creeping up from the valley and the whisper only the wind rustling the leaves of the trees.

EPILOGUE

THE Archives of the Indias and of Spain, and the National Library of Santiago, Chile, contain many important documents bearing directly or indirectly upon Ines Suarez. Some of the old chronicles were lost, many were destroyed in the burning of Santiago, yet there remains a rich treasury of historical records.

Four documents considered pertinent to the story here written have been selected as revealing what took place after the curtain went down upon the drama of Ines Suarez.

The first document is taken from the Archives of the Indias. Translated from the Spanish, it reads:

"DON CARLOS by Divine Clemency *semper augusto* King of Germany; DOÑA JUANA, his Mother; and the same DON CARLOS by the same Grace King of Castile, of León, of Aragon, of the two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarre, of Granada, of Toledo, of Valencia, of Gallicia, of Majorca, of Seville, of Sardinia, of Corsica, of Murcia, of Jaen, of the Algarves (Portugal), of Algeciras, of Gibraltar, of the Islands of the Canaries, of the Indias, Islands of Tierra Firma of the Great Sea (Mar Oceano); Count of Barcelona, Lord of Biscay, of Molina; Duke of Athens and of Neopatria; Count of Rosellon and of Sardinia; Marquis of Oristan and of Gotha; Archduke of Austria; Duke of Burgundy and of Brabant; Count of Flanders and of Tyrol,

etc., by act and grace to you, Don Pedro de Valdivia, our Governor of the Province of Chile, called of the New Extremadura which is in our Indias of the Great Sea (Mar Oceano), Having respect for the many good and loyal services that you have executed especially in the discovery, conquest and population of the said province, and hoping that you may continue to execute them from this day forward, and desiring to compensate and remunerate you for them, it is our Will and our Mercy that we do now appoint you for all your life to be our Governor in the said Province."

The document is signed: "I, the King (YO EL REY)."

It is dated June 11, 1554, and from the date it is evident that word of the death of Pedro de Valdivia in the December preceding had not yet reached Spain.

In the Archives of the Indias appears also, under date of January 18, 1554, the following:

"THE PRINCE: By these presents I give license and facility to you, Doña María Ortiz de Gaete, wife of Governor Pedro de Valdivia, that you may pass and that you do pass from this Kingdom to the Province of Chile where at present your husband resides, and that you may take with you your jewelry of gold and of wrought silver to the amount of three thousand *pesos* of gold, for the service of your person and your house, paying the duties which because of them you owe to his Majesty, and that this accomplished you may have neither embargo nor impediment put upon you.

Signed: "I, the Prince," dated at Valladolid.

The Prince was Felipe (Philip the Second) who was serving for his father during one of King Carlos' numerous absences from Spain. Neither the Prince

nor María Ortiz de Gaete could have known at that time of Valdivia's death.

In the National Library of Santiago, Chile, there is a copy of another document relating to María Ortiz de Gaete, dated a year after the Prince gave her permission to leave Spain. It is signed by the King and reads:

"THE KING: To the President and Those of Our Council of the Indias: On the part of the wife of Don Pedro de Valdivia who was our Governor of the Province of Chile, she having sent me word of that which we already know of the death of her said husband, and of how he served us well and loyally in the discovery, conquest and population of the said province, and having left no legitimate children, that to her as his wife belong the Indians which he owned and which he left at his death; begs us to follow the custom which we have heretofore taken with the discoverers and conquerors of the Indias, especially since at the time her said husband was killed she was on her way to those parts and received the news at Panama; that he died owing about one hundred thousand *castellanos* to the Royal Treasury and another hundred thousand odd, all of which were spent in our service, and that he left no other means by which these sums could be paid except by the renting of the Indians, NOW, Therefore, it becomes our duty to grant this in accordance with our custom followed with the wives of other conquerors, and I order that you consult with her and inform us what it is best to do and to provide for her, and it is so ordered and done.

Signed: "I, the King," dated at Brussels, January 10, 1555.

In the National Library of Chile there is a copy also of another important document—two documents, rather—dated eight years apart. The first, bearing the date of January 2, 1550, reads:

"Don Pedro de Valdivia, Governor and Captain-General of the Province of Chile of the New Extremadura: Inasmuch as you, Doña Ines Suarez, are the first founder of the house and church of our Lady of Monserrate—which is near the city of Santiago—and are desirous of assisting as far as lies within your means in the upkeep and maintenance of said house and church, and because it is just that all good Christians should make benefactions in accordance with their will and ability and I, moved by service to the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of sinners, affirm that it is my will and desire to give the said house to you and I do give it from this day and date, together with the lands for sowing which I have in this city, and that wheat and corn and whatever is necessary for my house—which same is also yours—and for the said church and house shall be sown, and that you shall do whatever you think best for those who have charge of the said house, with as many Indians as are in this my house and to use them for the work of said lands, without let or hindrance.

In faith of which I have ordered these presents signed in my name and endorsed by Juan de Cardenas, scribe."

Signed: Pedro de Valdivia, Santiago, Jan. 2, 1550.

The above document forms a part of the document which follows and which is dated August 2, 1558, a

copy of which taken from the Archives of the Indias is filed in the National Library of Santiago, Chile.

"In the City of Santiago, before me—Pedro de Salcedo—scribe and notary, appeared Captain Rodrigo de Quiroga and Doña Ines Suarez, his legitimate wife, residents of the said city, and the said Ines Suarez begs and orders the said Rodrigo de Quiroga, her husband, and each for himself agrees that inasmuch as she founded the house and hermitage of our Lady of Monserrate, which is near to the city of Santiago, and inasmuch as Don Pedro de Valdivia, deceased and of good memory, who lives in glory, gave her the said house, the lands and the adjoining farms which begin where the river in this city follows the Royal Road to Gucharaba as far as the mill of Juan Jofre and which have for limits on the one side the said Royal Road which goes to Gucharaba thence to the farm of the Springs of Araya and on the other side to the Sierra which is in front of the said hermitage of Our Lady of Monserrate; and inasmuch as the disposal of the said lands have been left in her charge, it is now the will of the said Rodrigo de Quiroga and the said Ines Suarez, his wife, to erect a church and to donate it perpetually to the Friars of the Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Order of Predicadores, with the understanding that on every third Friday a mass and divine service shall be said for the conversion of the natives of these lands, for the said Rodrigo de Quiroga and the said Ines Suarez, for their fathers and their grandfathers, their children and their descendents, and for the souls of the other *conquistadores* of these lands."

Signed: Rodrigo de Quiroga; Ines Suarez. Dated at Santiago, Chile, August 22, 1558.

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